

RECLAIMING THE WASTE. By Dr. E. J. Russell.  
LIFE AND HUMAN NATURE AT THE FRONT. By Henry D. Davray.

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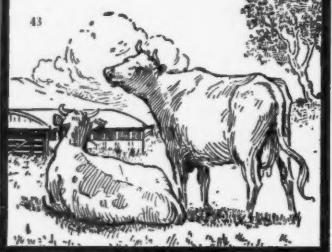
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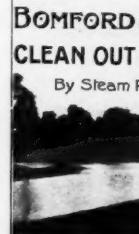
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E. O. HOPPE

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# COUNTRY LIFE

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>Our Frontispiece: Lady Leveson-Gower</i> .....	145, 146
<i>German Prisoners. (Leader)</i> .....	146
<i>Country Notes</i> .....	147
" <i>Fires of the North</i> ," by M. G. Meugens .....	147
<i>An Exemplar</i> , by V. H. Friedlaender .....	148
<i>Reclaiming the Waste</i> , by the Director of the Rothamsted Experimental Station .....	149
<i>The Potato Battlefields</i> .....	150
<i>A Saving in Transport</i> .....	151
<i>Life and Human Nature at the Front</i> , by Henry D. Davray. (Illustrated) .....	152
<i>Country Home: Longnor Hall, Shropshire</i> , by H. Avray Tipping. (Illustrated) .....	156
<i>A Winter's Day Walk</i> . (Illustrated) .....	163
<i>Literature</i> .....	165
<i>An Introduction to a Biology and Other Papers</i> (A. D. Darbshire). Correspondence .....	166
Dr. Edwards on Reclamation Expenses; Converting Lawns and Pleasure Grounds into Potato Plots George Bolam and C. E. Curtis; English Potatoes in America C. V. V. Sewell; A Dartmoor Sheep-wash; The Cost of Producing Table Poultry (F. G. Paynter); A Gigantic Stack (S. A. Brown); Not an American; In Memory of Lusitania Victims; Chows Worrying Sheep; An Arch of Icicles (F. Shewring); Pattygawaws; A Decrease in Starlings (Ralph Chislett); A Frost Scene in London (F. E. Cook); The Deserted Mill (E. M. McLaren); Old Fire Hooks (Henry Clarke).	
<i>Lesser Country Houses of To-day: Houses on Lord Leigh's Estate</i> , by Lawrence Weaver. (Illustrated) .....	2*
<i>English Drawings and Furniture at the Burlington Fine Arts Club</i> , by H. Clifford Smith. (Illustrated) .....	6*
<i>Woodlands in Winter</i> .....	8*
<i>The Automobile World</i> . (Illustrated) .....	10*
<i>Racing and Breeding Notes</i> .....	14*
<i>Modes and Moods</i> . (Illustrated) .....	16*
<i>From the Editor's Bookshelf</i> .....	20*
<i>For Town and Country</i> .....	20*

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## GERMAN PRISONERS

DURING the next few weeks German prisoners will occupy a prominent position on the land. Arrangements for getting them to work have to a large extent been made, and the British farmer with a whimsicalness not usually characteristic of him has suddenly changed his attitude from that of dislike to one of curiosity. At first it seemed repugnant to him, as it did to the French, that men from the country of the hated enemy should be brought into his midst and made to work in the fields. But necessity often has the effect of removing a great many scruples and prejudices. Now it looks as though there were going to be a competition among the farmers for the services of these men. The objections they raise have taken a different turn altogether. A young farmer, whom one may call a squireen, as he owns the yeoman holding which he cultivates, put some of these difficulties before the present writer. He and a few of his neighbours have agreed among themselves each to try five prisoners, that being the smallest number which they think

they can obtain, and also the number for whom they could find constant employment from the beginning of March to the end of the potato harvest. The first of his questions was in regard to language. "These men speak German, I understand," he said, in the slow, deliberate manner of the true countryman, "when you speak to them, they will never understand whether you are cursing at their mistakes or giving them orders. How is that to be got over?" Further, he went on to enquire whether farming tools, implements and machinery bore the same names with the enemy as they do with us. If not, how was he to get them to understand the difference between a plough and a harrow, supposing that two horses were to be yoked to one or the other? These are very great difficulties, and they suggest a thousand others. Our reply appeared to give him satisfaction. It was that he should bargain to have in the team at least one intelligent petty officer who had some understanding of the language, or at any rate did not lack intelligence. It would not be impossible to get into the head of such a man what was wanted, and as the others are accustomed to obey him, orders would best be given indirectly. In France such a petty officer does not hesitate to use very strong language to the men, and even to subject them to discipline which an English farmer would not care to apply to strangers. The question simply is whether there are enough non-commissioned officers to go round. It has been found by experience that such men are rather proud of the position they are given of commanding a squad and have something of that vanity which often comes to those who are clothed with a little brief authority.

The housing question at one time appeared insoluble, but the Military Authorities have shown considerable tact in getting over it. When one comes to think, there are a good many vacant buildings in the country, such as hospitals that never have been used, convalescent homes that at present have no inmates, and, most of all, farmhouses that have become vacant. Before the war there was a great dearth of country cottages, owing in large measure to the custom of townspeople who rented them for week-ends. They did not always recognise that while providing themselves with a pleasant rural retreat for Saturday to Monday visits they were depriving the rural labourer of his home. And the rural labourer could do nothing. These houses are not, in the neighbourhood to which we refer, merely cottages. At one time the district, like the greater part of England, was covered with small farms; but during the last thirty or forty years there has been a decided tendency towards joining a great many tiny holdings together so as to form one large one. In that case the farmhouses became useless for their original purpose. Some were divided in two, so as to accommodate a couple of labouring families; others—and this applies particularly to that large circle which lies within a radius of, say, from twenty to thirty-five miles from the heart of London—were let to men who did not mind going up to town and returning each day with a season ticket. A considerable proportion, both of the labourers who shared the original farmhouses between them and of the new tenants who were really townsmen playing at being in the country, have gone to the war. It may not be practicable just at present to divide the German labourers into groups so small that they could be lodged in farmhouses, though this had actually been done in France; but no insuperable difficulty is being found in providing them with buildings of one kind and another capable of holding thirty-five or so. The idea is that they shall be divided into squads for work in the morning and return to this improvised barracks at night. There is no reason at all why those who take kindly to English agricultural work should not be placed in the farmhouses even when they number five or six only. As a matter of fact, many of these houses have accommodated twenty to thirty English soldiers in the early days of training for the war.

## Our Frontispiece

OUR frontispiece is a portrait of Lady Leveson-Gower, formerly Lady Rose Constance Bowes-Lyon, a daughter of the fourteenth Earl of Strathmore, whose marriage to the Hon. William Spencer Leveson-Gower took place last year.

\* \* \* It is particularly requested that no permissions to photograph houses, gardens or livestock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper. When such requests are received, the Editor would esteem the kindness of readers if they would forward the correspondence at once to him.

# COUNTRY



## • NOTES •

**I**N Dr. Russell's masterly paper on reclamation which appears on another page he ends by asking, "How far can land reclamation go?" and he concludes that "unfortunately we can give no definite answer." But this is a matter which is every day becoming more urgently important. Our present experience with submarines goes to show that in future no country will be in a secure position unless able to feed its own population. Now, many cocksure writers on agriculture have long been accustomed to repeat one after the other that under no circumstances could Great Britain grow its own food. The reply is that they dogmatise about what they cannot know. From time to time we have shown in these pages how an expert scientific farmer has increased the productivity of the soil to a remarkable degree. The classic example is that of Dr. Somerville, who trebled the productivity of Poverty Bottom by skilful and knowledgeable treatment. That farm is surrounded by others which are as unproductive to-day as the former was before Dr. Somerville's occupation. Over the whole country, often side by side with splendidly cultivated farms, there are other lands which are not yielding a quarter of what they could yield. Here, then, is wide scope for effort. The public is not likely to forget the figures in Mr. Middleton's famous pamphlet.

**THAT**, perhaps, is the more urgent necessity of the hour. The land being dealt with is already in hand, and what it requires is only more intensive cultivation. Great Britain cannot afford now to allow any individual to occupy a huge area of land for the purpose of lazily earning a livelihood by obtaining a relatively small average production per acre. There was much talk in Parliament the other night about an agricultural policy, but it is obvious that no policy is worth the breath used to describe it that does not keep this aim in view. As soon as the immediate difficulties are got over, as Dr. Russell urges, the next prudent step will be to survey the wastes. Even judged by Continental standards, a vast acreage of them could now be brought under profitable cultivation. But it has never been the habit of English agriculturists only to copy their neighbours. There are possibilities in reclamation which Continental science has not yet fathomed. It should be made part of the curriculum of every agricultural college in the country.

**I**N connection with this, the important letter which we publish from Dr. Edwards demands attention. Dr. Edwards is one of those experts who for ever will remain a scholar; the more he knows the more he desires to know. Those Suffolk and Norfolk heaths on which he has worked now for some twelve years have been a study full of interest. No farmer who simply worked on traditional lines is likely to succeed unless he can discard his ancient prejudices and approach his work with the open mind of a little child. In this connection it may be suggested how very advantageous it would be to have pupil-labourers at Methwold—intelligent young men who would engage in the actual cultivation and at the same time prepare themselves to reclaim sandy wastes on their own account. This was practically done in Suffolk,

where Dr. Edwards experimented for some ten years before being connected with the reclamation at Methwold, and but for the war there would have been several men of his training now farming the lands he has brought in. That is one reason why we were keen on getting soldiers on to reclamation work. They could learn about the system before actually entering on the work. Many of the young officers are looking out for a career on the land, and could in a short time master the principles of reclamation.

**A LITTLE** consideration will show that the items in Lord Devonport's food rations are not of equal importance to the country at the present moment. The Food Controller has told us that the farmers have succeeded in producing a splendid supply of livestock. So that for once Great Britain is in the position that if supplies of meat were cut off altogether, she could go on very comfortably for many months to come. Therefore, economy in meat is not the most important question of the moment, though in itself very useful and desirable. But it is imperative that really strenuous efforts should be made to save in regard to the consumption of bread. This is rather hard on poor country people, because the bread bill forms the most important item in the budget, and for the time being their gardens are useless, the frost having destroyed those green vegetables which as a rule keep them going till the early crops come. Nevertheless, the safety of the country urgently demands a most frugal use of bread and flour, and Lord Devonport would be well advised in bringing into operation his compulsory powers in order to enforce it.

"FIRES OF THE NORTH."

Oh, fires of the North burn fierce and strong  
Where the hammers clamour and ring,  
Where they build the ships for the British Fleet  
And the great cranes tower and swing,  
Build fast the ships for the battle-line  
Build fast and build them well,  
To bear the strain of the wintry seas  
And the enemy's pounding shell.

Oh, men of the North work fast and sure,  
To fashion the white hot steel—  
In the gloom of the shed where great lights flare—  
In the ribs of the skeleton keel.  
Make rivet and bolt and gun and plate  
Strong and true for their work,  
So they stand the test of the future day,  
At sea, in the fighting murk.

Oh, soul of the North be true as the steel,  
Be fierce as your furnaces' glow.  
Build true, build fast for the battle-line  
And the guns that strike the blow.  
By your ships we know you staunch and true,  
Your work in the fighting Fleet  
Is the strength of the rivet and the play of a gun  
Which shall spell the foe's defeat.

M. G. MEUGENS.

**WHEN** plans for cultivating the ground are being discussed it should not be left out of mind that ground belonging to soldiers either on active service or in training runs a great risk of being neglected. Where the late occupant is dead or very severely wounded the risk is still greater. It has been suggested by a writer who adopts the pseudonym of "An Old Schoolmaster" that under their teachers scholars should be directed to dig these gardens and sow them with seed. The suggestion is admirable, and we hope the Board of Education will adopt it. In many schools gardening is taught on very practical lines in these days, and a gang of elementary schoolboys could in a very short time clear up a neglected garden and sow and plant it. No doubt means could be found to provide them with the necessary seeds, roots, and so on. It would be discreditable to the country if no effort were made to do the work that otherwise would have devolved upon men who are either defending their country or have made the sacrifice demanded from so many of our citizens.

**A CORRESPONDENT** writes to ask how the Devonport food ration of four pounds of bread per week, which now costs elevenpence, compares with potatoes purchased at twopence a pound. This is the price mentioned on a store's list accompanying his letter. It is generally understood that the retail price was to be three halfpence a pound,

but, nevertheless, it is in black and white that this particular store, which is a very important one, is charging twopence a pound. At twopence a pound, five and a half pounds of potatoes could be bought for elevenpence, and no one would contend for a moment that there is in five and a half pounds of potatoes the same nourishment that is to be obtained from four pounds of bread. In other words, potatoes at twopence a pound would be an unprofitable addition to diet. Even at three halfpence a pound, it is doubtful if the economical housekeeper would be justified in purchasing them. At that price a little over seven pounds of potatoes could be bought for the price of a four pound loaf. But a man doing manual work, at any rate, would be very well advised to stick to the loaf.

**MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S** Lincoln Day message to the Americans ought to help our neighbours to understand the Entente position better than they have before. The Prime Minister draws a very interesting parallel between the Civil War and this in which we are engaged. Abraham Lincoln fought against slavery for liberty. He would accept no compromise, because the utmost that his adversaries would have consented to would have been the severance of the Union and the establishment of a United States in the south and another in the north. Events proved that he was right. He won the war and no bad blood was left behind. It is doubtful if a single American of to-day has inherited any ill-will from his father or his grandfather who took part in the Civil War. Good feeling has swept over both combatants like a beneficent tide. Mr. Lloyd George argues that we, too, are fighting against slavery, only they call it militarism. There can be no doubt that the determination of Germany to have an army that could dominate Europe, and later to have a navy also which could hold its own with any other navy in the world was answerable for the war and all it has meant to us and to our Allies. On that ground alone it should be possible to establish a strong sympathy between the United States and Great Britain.

**FEW** who knew the Duke of Norfolk only by his titles would surmise what an extraordinarily homely, unpretentious, manly man wore all these distinctions. Thackeray would have delighted to enumerate them. He was Duke of Norfolk and Earl of Surrey, Earl of Arundel and Norfolk, Baron Fitzalan, Chun, Oswaldestre, and Maltravers, Earl-Marshal, Hereditary Marshal of England, premier Duke and premier Earl of England, inheritor of estates that had belonged to his family since the Conquest; and yet these honours lay so lightly on his head that when met casually he was often mistaken for one of mean degree. He possessed a natural dignity that made those artificial distinctions look small. His life is one that will repay the closest scrutiny. To the Church to which he belonged—the Roman Catholic—he was devoted; the Crown had no more loyal servant, the men on his estates had no surer friend, and even strangers when they put before him an appeal calling for help and compassion were never refused. He was one of the few men who read all the letters addressed to him and did his best to respond to any appeal that seemed genuine. Although not directly a victim of the war, he was so indirectly, because since hostilities began, his activity was only equalled by the strain upon his feelings. Only in the last stage of his illness did he confess to being tired, and when he said that "those to whom he spoke knew that he had finished his work." The quotation is from the intimate appreciation which appeared in the *Times* of Monday.

**WHILE** our soldiers during the last two years have been facing unparalleled horrors of battle other Englishmen have been going through an experience equally tragic in the Antarctic regions. Sir Ernest Shackleton's account is almost as tragic as was that of Captain Scott. The party marooned in the Ross Sea owing to the breaking away of the *Aurora* from her mooring in 1915, have had terrible adventures. Captain Mackintosh, Hayward, and the Rev. Spencer-Smith have perished, after displaying the greatest heroism and fortitude in a continuous series of misfortunes. The rest of the party are well, but underwent sufferings that might easily have been their undoing. On the same barrier where Scott met with his death and where two of his sledges were found a blizzard raged from February 17th to March 1st, with a temperature thirty degrees below zero. At first the party remained in camp, but as fuel and provisions were practically exhausted and the men were weakening rapidly in their frozen sleeping bags, camp was broken. So on the 23rd, after three hours spent in digging the buried sledges out, the party started in a blinding drift for the depot eleven miles away. It must

have been a terrible journey, calling forth all those qualities for which the race is famous. Mackintosh fell in his tracks shortly after starting and had to be left with Smith, and Wild to look after both. Joyce, Richards and Hayward, with four starving dogs struggled on. Only four dogs were left and Sir Ernest Shackleton enshrines their names in his account. Gunner, Con, Towser and Oscar. Four-footed heroes these, not unworthy of the gallant men whose lives they saved.

**IN** respect to the War Loan, an excellent suggestion has been issued to the various golf clubs throughout the kingdom. It is "that members of each club might combine to subscribe to the War Loan in small sums in addition to their larger subscriptions." Subscriptions should be in multiples of £4 15s. (for £5 of 5 per cent. War Loan), and the idea is that they could be invested in the names of the individual subscribers, the golf club acting merely as a centre for the collection of small subscriptions. By doing this the club would take part in an important national movement, and so excellent an example once set should be imitated. This scheme, if worked with energy, might be the means of bringing in at least a quarter of a million to the Loan.

#### AN EXEMPLAR.

To live—

That at my step none start  
Or hide his heart,  
None need, to please my eyes,  
Be decked in lies,  
Or, fearing for my pain,  
Cherish a chain :

To love—

That, living when I die,  
Love may deny  
Death's bitterest alloy  
Of secret joy,  
Of freedom after grief,  
Of shamed relief.

No more?—

No more. So death should bring  
For me no sting,  
And so the grave should be  
My victory.

V. H. FRIEGLAENDER.

**MR. PROTHERO'S** exhortation to Lancashire farmers at Preston was spirited and to the point. The speech might be very freely paraphrased in this way: "You farmers must consider yourselves in a beleaguered city. Men in such circumstances do not think of all the things that are necessary for them to carry on their work. They lay their minds asleep to make the most they can out of the circumstances in which they are placed and the resources at their disposal. We cannot let you have as much labour as we would like, because the war comes first, but you can have women workers, you can make what you can of C<sub>3</sub> men, you can have partially disabled soldiers, and you can have German prisoners. Out of this mixed pack you should do your best to get effective work. The business is to get the seed into the ground and to grow it. If you stick to that I am sure you will succeed." Of course, there is a great deal more than that in what he said. It is important to note, for instance, that the Government are drawing out a scheme for advancing money for the purchase of fertilisers. But labour is the question overshadowing all others in the mind of the farmer, and the President of the Board of Agriculture was only attaching to it its proper importance.

**THAT** reclamation is extending its popularity is strikingly evident from Mrs. Barnett's letter in the *Times* on the reclamation of women. It brings home to us that there are barren wastes in life as well as in land, and perhaps the most pitiable of all these barren wastes is that represented by fallen women. The efforts of Mrs. Barnett deserve the highest support. But once the principle is adopted, it will be recognised that there are barren wastes among the masculine as well as among the feminine sections of our population. No doubt there are fewer idlers than there were before the war, but there are numerous occupations which, as far as men are concerned, must be described as barren wastes. A cynic might go so far as to hint that the whole region of politics is part of that useless territory.

# RECLAIMING THE WASTE

BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE ROTHAMSTED EXPERIMENTAL STATION.

**Reclaiming the Waste**, by P. Anderson Graham. (COUNTRY LIFE Library.)

**T**HIS is the arresting title Mr. Graham gives to his book on a subject which must appeal to every man and woman interested in the future of the country. Out of a total area of 56,000,000 acres of land in Great Britain we cultivate only 32,000,000; of the remaining 24,000,000 less than half is taken up with cities, roads, public parks, etc., and some 13,000,000 is left as rough grazing land receiving little or no attention and producing only small amounts of food. In an old settled country like ours, where the people, in spite of a general law-abiding tendency, nevertheless in the long run manage to get their own way, it is a safe presumption that waste land has at least the reputation of being impossible to cultivate. But it is one thing to have a reputation and another thing to deserve it, and nowadays the word "impossible" is not lightly to be used: of recent years methods of cultivation have been worked out which enable us to deal with land that the older methods could not touch. Mr. Graham gives several instances in his book of important modern reclamations, including the well known Methwold scheme of Dr. C. S. Edwards, and some of the Dutch and Belgian schemes which will be new to most readers.

It is not my purpose to write a review of Mr. Graham's book, although it is worthy of the best efforts of a good reviewer. I purpose rather to set out a few thoughts that arose during the reading of the book. As already stated, one can safely presume that waste land is locally considered unfit for cultivation, and we must therefore enquire why land is thus unfit, and if there is any way in which the defects may be remedied. Obviously, before cultivation is possible the conditions must be suited to the growth of plants; in other words, both climate and soil must be suitable. Climate apparently cannot be altered to any extent, but there are ways of mitigating its effects and, above all, the plant breeder can always hope to evolve a variety, or even a strain, that will stand the local conditions sufficiently well to justify the labour and expense of cultivating it.

Soil, however, is much more amenable to treatment and offers considerable prospects of amelioration. The problem has been reduced to a science, and reclamation in many instances is simply a case of trouble and expense. The underlying principle is that the plant must have all its needs satisfied: if anything is left undone it constitutes a factor limiting the growth of the crop. The steps necessary for reclamation are, therefore, first, to discover the limiting factors and then to put them out of action as cheaply and effectively as possible. Experience has shown that the following are the common limiting factors in waste land: Excess of water, insufficient water, sourness or acidity, insufficient depth of soil, insufficient supplies of plant nutrients.

Excess of water can be dealt with only by some form of drainage. The old method was to dig trenches and lay pipes: when properly done this is extremely effective and permanent, but it assumes a way out for the water. The ditches and watercourses have to be kept clear of weeds and made to run straight so that water shall get away quickly: the mouths of the drains have to be kept clean and free from rats, voles, etc. This has to be done right down to the river and not simply on the particular land that is being drained, and if a farmer a little lower down neglects his ditches he may hold up his neighbour's improvement schemes indefinitely.

There is some legal power of redress, but the process is so cumbersome that it is rarely put into operation. My own view is that the whole problem of drainage wants reconsidering, and that instead of being left to the discretion of individuals it should be taken in hand by properly constituted Boards just as has had to be done in the case of roads and other public services. Assuming the outflow arrangements are made to work satisfactorily it is no longer necessary to use the old tile drains. On undulating clay soils free from large stones, where drainage is usually most needed, the mole drain proves very effective. This is made by forcing a steel cylinder about 2½ in. in diameter through the soil at a distance of 9 in. or more below the surface: the

process is similar to ploughing, except, of course, that the tunnels are made at a suitable distance apart. The cheapest method of procedure is usually to let the work out to some firm which makes a speciality of it, and who will lay out the lines and the draining at a fixed charge per acre. In Oxfordshire this is done at £1 per acre.

Insufficiency of water is more troublesome. Irrigation is, of course, the proper way of coping with the difficulty, but in this country it is not usually feasible. If the rainfall is sufficient—as it practically always is here—the trouble is due to insufficient retention on the part of the soil. There are several ways of dealing with this. Additions of clay or marl make the soil more retentive of moisture, and therefore get over the difficulty; and in the reclamations of the Early Victorian times, when labour was cheap, such additions were very common. Nowadays they are more costly and therefore less frequently undertaken. Organic matter also increases the retentiveness of the soil, and it has the advantage that it can be produced *in situ*, and need not be carried about. Thus a crop can be grown and ploughed in, and this process can be repeated till the soil is as rich as is desired. Of course it takes time; a good deal if not all of the growing season is used up for each crop, and probably not more than two crops a year can be got in under any system. But it is very effective. Usually the best plan is to devote, say, one year in five to the growth of such "green manure" crops.

A variant on this method is to allow sheep to eat the crops on the land so that their droppings can fertilise the soil. This comes as near as the farmer can get to "Having one's cake and eating it too," but it suffers from the drawback that it needs a considerable capital outlay in livestock, much skill and knowledge in dealing with them, and a sufficient supply of succulent food to keep them all the time they are on the farm. Where these conditions are satisfied the method often works very well. Good cultivation also goes a long way towards making up for deficiencies in retentiveness, and with the steady improvement in implements the farmer is now able to maintain at comparatively little trouble and expense the fine tilth on the surface of a light soil that retains the moisture and checks evaporation. Usually a combination of two or three of these methods is desirable, but the net result is that light soils can now be cultivated with profit which a generation ago could not economically be farmed.

Insufficient depth of soil is a more serious trouble which can only occasionally be dealt with. No really satisfactory method has ever been devised, and the one who could solve the problem would probably win, and would certainly deserve, both fame and fortune. Many of our commons are of this nature; they represent the residue of thin, poor soil that successive generations of farmers have elected to leave alone, and it must be admitted that we are not yet in a position to take them in hand. In a few cases the trouble arises from a thin layer of rock lying close to the surface, which might be torn out by machinery or blown out with explosives. Where the solid rock, or, what is perhaps even worse, a bed of gravel comes close up to the surface the case is almost hopeless on our present knowledge.

Insufficiency of plant nutrients is a common cause of infertility, but, fortunately, this can be remedied. In peace times the range of artificial fertilisers is so wide that no great difficulty need arise as to supply, and experience is steadily accumulating to show what is needed in any given set of conditions.

Sourness or acidity can be remedied only in one way—by the use of lime, limestone or chalk. Modern developments of grinding machinery have made it possible to grind limestone to so fine a condition that a small weight per acre is as effective as the large dressings of coarse chalk or lime that were common in the old days. Thus the farmer can now at any time remedy this particular defect, whereas before he was bound to wait for a favourable opportunity to cart and spread the large dressings needed.

It will be found that successful reclamations are all based on these principles. The well known improvement of poor grassland effected by the use of basic slag, which has made the name of Cockle Park famous, is a case of

remedy a deficiency in plant nutrients so that white clover can establish itself and bring about the natural reclamation of soil and herbage. Poverty Bottom is an example of the way in which this improvement can be carried through all sections of the farm so as to raise the level of productiveness not only of one crop, but of all. Finally, the Methwold scheme involves the successful application of several of these principles: the breaking up and levelling of the land, neutralising its sourness or acidity; providing the proper plant nutrients at the proper time;

arranging for suitable cultivations to maintain the fine surface tilth necessary to conserve moisture and to keep down all competing weeds which would deprive the crop of such water and food as are present.

How far can land reclamation go? Unfortunately, we are in no position to give a definite answer. A survey is badly needed of the present wastes. Some can be dealt with more easily than others, and the only wise course is to begin at the least difficult end of an admittedly hard problem.

E. J. RUSSELL.

## THE POTATO BATTLEFIELDS

FROM A CORRESPONDENT.

**M**R. PROTHERO is what Artemus Ward called "a literary cuss," and perhaps there was poetic exaggeration in his suggestion that the Battle of the Somme must be fought out on the potato fields of England; but in any case I thought it devolved on a plain citizen to ascertain some facts about this aspect of the conflict. And if potatoes are as scarce and elusive as facts, the crop outlook must be a poor one. To begin at the beginning, who is our general on the field, Lord Devonport or the President of the Board of Agriculture? Future history alone can solve the riddle; it will also record whether the price to be paid for the crop about to be grown is a maximum, as Mr. Bonar Law declared it to be on February 7th, or a minimum, according to Mr. Prothero, speaking in the House of Commons the day after.

It is no good lingering even to laugh at doubts and contradictions, the question of the moment is that of the next crop. Can seed potatoes be found and distributed? Are growers prepared to set acres of them? The first of these problems is headquarters' affair, and as far as small holders are concerned, the Board has a scheme. The war committees of the various counties were entrusted with the task of discovering what the local demand is. They in their turn appointed agricultural sub-committees for the purpose. All returns were to be in before Thursday of the present week, after which the Board will be engaged in placing the orders and arranging for the expeditious delivery. So far, so well. It is not a perfect arrangement, but the only useful criticism is to show as well as one can where it falls short, so that steps may be taken to cover the ground it misses.

First, then, the demand is so great that it is hopeless to expect its fulfilment. For weeks past the hunt for seed potatoes has been most arduous. Nearly everybody who owns seed potatoes has been besieged with would-be purchasers—merchants, seedsmen, growers, including representatives of the myriads of societies that have come into existence to help and advise them. What if Scotland, Ireland and the English potato districts cannot meet the demand? At the moment it is impossible to say what Scotch potatoes are still in the clamps and cannot be taken out and riddled in such weather as the country is still experiencing as we write. Further, the growing demand for eating potatoes must intensify the call for seed. It has been greatly stimulated by the issue of Lord Devonport's food rations. A bread allowance of 4lb. per head is ample when potatoes are plentiful, not when they are scarce. The price of the 4lb. loaf is now 11d.; the retail price of the same weight of potatoes is 6d. At 11d. a pound the latter is the better value, and it has greater bulk—no small consideration where young appetites have to be satisfied. Many greengrocers are ready to buy potatoes unriddled; that is, selling both seed and ware for consumption. Nor should too much importance be attached to the fixed price, which can be got over in a thousand ways. It is probable enough that the unauthenticated stories going round are *ben trovato*, but they are being widely repeated. One is that of a grower who sold his clamp at £8 a ton, but on condition of receiving another £4 a ton for handling; another that a farmer made the purchase of his old drake for £300 a condition of his sale; a third of one who did the same with a rabbit. These are probably invented stories. A robust judge and jury would deal severely with such a case if brought before a court of law, but a keen buyer and a willing seller can easily dodge

a fixed price. At any rate, the scarcity of table potatoes must affect seed. In a stores weekly list, dated February 17th, English cooking potatoes are priced at 16s., while Arran Chief are offered for seed at 19s., only 3s. more. The Board of Agriculture fixed the price of Arran Chief at £12 to the Perthshire grower, and puts the cost of commission, carriage and distribution at £3 8s. or thereabouts. This cost was incurred with potatoes sent from Perth to Chelmsford.

I am sure the demand transmitted by the county war committees will fall short of the real need. For what is the object to be attained? It is that every small grower throughout the country should as near as possible be self-supporting. If the cottager had his garden well stocked with vegetables, especially with plenty of carrots, onions, beetroot and so on, an allotment of anything from a quarter of an acre up to two acres of potatoes and a pig he might defy famine. There is not enough first quality seed in existence to meet all requirements, but if Scotch or Irish seed cannot be had, it is better to plant those of the next door neighbour than to let the land stand empty. And this is what is wanted to complete the scheme.

Eventually it will be found that many thousands who wish to grow potatoes have not been able to obtain seed of any kind. It was the difficulty of obtaining seed and its dearness last season that were the main causes of the shortage. The sub-committees have not succeeded in getting to all small growers. I want to help rather than criticise, and will not name a county, but after pretty careful enquiry, what I find is that the scheme has been most thoroughly known in some localities and not at all in others. Of two guards in a railway train, both keen gardeners and industrious men, one had never heard of any scheme and had no seed, the other knew all about it and had his order in. They live in different villages, and the explanation discovered after cross-examining them was that one belongs to an allotment society, the secretary of which had given him his papers, and the other did not. In one village everybody knew about the plan and discussed it eagerly; in another nobody had heard of it, and several had made up their minds to plant tubers they had grown themselves last year. A very steady, industrious smallholder who cultivates about three acres and does some market gardening asked me to find out for him if anything was being done and to whom he should write. One would have thought an advertisement in the local papers would have reached those who are ploughing a lonely furrow where there are no allotment societies.

Something should be done at once. Husbandry of nearly all kinds has been paralysed since Christmas, but should be attacked energetically as soon as the weather permits. Mid-February is very late for attending to seed potatoes under any circumstances, as it gives no chance to sprout them. It is very probable that March dust will be provided to set them in and a bountiful crop might follow, but the occasion is one for prompt action, especially as large farmers are rather disheartened and, in many cases, have reduced the area devoted to this crop. Yet on them depends the feeding of the great industrial town populations. This letter is mainly concerned with the little man who grows not to sell, but to feed himself, his family and his pig.

It is to be hoped that the Food Controller and the Board of Agriculture have made it their business to know where stocks are held in the country as it may be necessary to impound all potatoes. Were that done, it would be comparatively easy to see that every grower obtains as much seed as is necessary for next year's crop.

## A SAVING IN TRANSPORT

**A**S the Great War goes on it is obvious that each belligerent's power of transport will be more and more restricted, it does not matter whether it be on the sea or on the land. Take, for example, railways in all the countries which are at war. It is clear that ordinary attention cannot be paid to the upkeep either of the rolling stock or of the permanent way. The railways have given freely of their men, and, broadly speaking, it may be said that no repairs are being done which can be put off. Germany, it can easily be seen, is feeling this more than any other nation. At the beginning of the war her transport by sea was practically stopped, and her strategic railways were at the highest point of efficiency when hostilities opened. Since then they have been gradually growing less so, and in recent operations it has been easy to recognise the very great difficulty with which Germany has managed to transfer troops from the western to the eastern frontier and *vice versa*. Her success in driving the Russians back from the territory they had conquered in 1915 was due almost entirely to superiority of transit. In consequence, the further they got from their base the less powerful they became, and every attempt at invasion crumbled up before the attack had been fully delivered.

We in this country are not so badly off as the people of any other country engaged in the war. Yet it behoves us to be extremely careful. Our powers of transport have been interfered with to a very considerable degree. Our advantage at the beginning lay in command of the sea, and for a while it appeared as though the huge mercantile fleet belonging to Great Britain, supported and defended by the Navy, would enable us to carry on our great business of importation and exportation with a sublime disregard of our enemies. In these days the submarine menace had not been fully considered. The U-boat acted almost exclusively within the narrow boundaries of the North Sea and in water comparatively shallow. After each new burst of submarine activity, our Navy was able in a short time to bring the adversary to book. A considerable number of submarines were destroyed, and the remainder learned that they could not adventure beyond certain areas without running into peril of destruction. Now has come a greater revival than ever of the submarine threat. Making all due allowance for exaggeration, it is evident that Germany has greatly improved her submarine boats and that they are able to travel much further from their bases and remain for longer periods at sea. The Atlantic is not like the German Ocean. It is both wide and deep, so that submarines are sought out with difficulty and most likely escape destruction often enough even after they have been traced. Nevertheless, it will be noticed from the figures published day by day that their destructiveness is gradually being diminished.

Admiral Beatty has found a way of drawing their teeth which is certain to grow more effective as time goes on. It has involved a great deal of dangerous work, however. The fact that a destroyer of an old type was blown up by a mine on Saturday night throws a ghastly light on the danger which our brave sailors have to face each night as they beat up and down the Channel, often amid icy snow and killing blasts. All the time they are in danger from hidden mines as well as from submarines, and nerve and eye must be tested to the extreme. They are doing brave work, and it devolves upon all those at home to help in so far as they are able. But, it may be asked, how can the stay-at-home aid in circumventing the submarine? The answer is simple. If we reduce our tonnage we reduce our danger. A little self-sacrifice on the part of those who are obliged to be non-combatants will lighten the sailors' burden. In addition to that, if we can manage to do without certain things that are not so necessary, we have more tonnage left at liberty for the transport of foodstuffs. In looking over a recent issue of the "Trade and Navigation Returns" issued by the Board of Trade, it is difficult to realise that we are a nation at war, for there are poured into the country shiploads of stuff that could easily be done without. Practically speaking, we bought as much tobacco in 1916 as we did in 1914. Of gloves and leather manufactured goods we bought a great deal more in the third year of war than we did in the first. Among the articles still being imported, there are many which would bear further restrictions.

Timber is another import that tends to increase steadily. Its value amounted to over £40,000,000 in 1916. The question arises whether or not it would be advisable to use our own

timber to a greater extent and thus save tonnage. Last week we noted a very interesting sale—a record sale, in fact—where a firm of auctioneers obtained no less than £15,000 for the oak on an estate. It has been very often written and said that hard wood just now is an unsaleable commodity, and, in fact, a great part of the country is still strewn with the elm trees blown down about a year ago for which no merchant will pay any price.

At this sale of oak, however, buyers assembled from all parts of Great Britain and there was a brisk competition. Some of the wood, we understand, is to be used as pit props. Of course, sawn oak will be more expensive for this purpose than the saplings which it has been customary to use; but necessity, as Herr Bethmann-Hollweg says, knows no law, and the mining engineer in these days may be glad that he can get pit props at any price, while oak pit props he probably considers a luxury. If oak, why not elm? There is a vast quantity of elm in the country which might be put to good use. The experience of the last few gales—to speak of nothing else—would reconcile the most ardent lover of the picturesque why actually dwells in the country to let it go without a sigh. The elm is the great field weed. It makes shallow roots, has a big head that overshadows the fertile land; it throws down its giant limbs on the slightest provocation, causing hurt to man and beast, and it does not weather the storm like the sturdy oak and the tough ash. Only the expensive sawing prevents it from being used for pit props. To take it away from our fields would add considerably to their productiveness. On the question of soft woods, it is perhaps best not to enter at the present moment.

As we have shown in these columns, the present war is emphatically a war of timber, and the timber used is mostly soft wood. A great many districts were absolutely denuded last year, but a considerable reserve still remains, and it may be well worth consideration whether the gain in tonnage would not justify its sacrifice. Really, the question hangs upon the duration of the war. We have at the moment arrangements by which supplies of timber from abroad come into this country with great regularity. It is not at all certain that if we dissolved these links we could bind them together again at a time of our own choosing; that is to say, when our stock of timber was getting low and we might be in very pressing need of new supplies. Other practical difficulties in the way of all this are that very drastic changes in our organisation would be necessary, changes that would take a long time to get right. For example, our supplies of timber have hitherto been essentially water borne. They come across the sea to certain centres, like London, Liverpool, Leith and so on; the ships are discharged at certain docks and, to a great extent, the cargoes are taken in barges to the places where they will be used. Our roads, railways and highways alike, were not originally devised for heavy timber traffic, and great and expensive alterations would have to be made before they would be available. Finally, there is the question of labour—labour which is so difficult to get at the present moment for producing the necessities of life. To divert any great part of it from agriculture to the sawing of timber would be a crime.

In addition to unskilled labour, sawyers must be found and they are not by any means a numerous class in this country, so that a very great labour difficulty exists. Possibly it might be solved by the military authorities. Our Citizen Army is composed to a great extent of artisans from whom the requisite number could be selected. Not only men, but plant would be needed. There is not in this country at present the machinery needed for the purpose of cutting and preparing the timber for use. These difficulties, however, need not prove insuperable. They exist and would need to be dealt with, but the question for the country is to consider the relative merits and demerits of the plan. Against the drawbacks which have been set forth is the supreme advantage of setting tonnage free for the conveyance of foodstuffs to this country, especially of our usual supply of cereals. And this must be considered quite apart from any submarine peril. Experience has shown, at any rate, that large ships armed with three guns suffer very little indeed from the submarine danger. The stealthy engines of destruction on which Admiral Tirpitz and the Kaiser are placing so much faith, are most at home in destroying trawlers and little vessels of a few hundred tons each. Except at the beginning of the war, they have achieved remarkably little success either against our ships

of war or armed merchantmen. In our opinion there is not much ground for alarm lest they should gravely menace our sea-borne supply of food. But the exigencies of the war have made very heavy demands upon ships which have had to transport men and munitions from one distant point to another in the largest Empire that exists or has existed. Neutral vessels, again, have suffered more from the submarines than those flying the British flag. Thus there is constriction in the national means of transport, and it is becoming urgent that we should dispense with unessential imports and devote our ships to carrying the necessities of life and the material of war.

## IN THE GARDEN

### TWO SUBSTITUTES FOR POTATOES.

**T**HE shortage of seed Potatoes is sure to lead to the disappointment of many intending Potato growers. Happily, there are other crops which may in some measure take the place of the noble tuber. There are Peas and Beans, for example, of which Broad Beans and Scarlet Runners are very profitable and nutritious; there are Turnips, Beetrots, Carrots, Onions and Leeks, all of which may be grown to perfection in this country; and there are the various members of the Cabbage family, which in normal seasons and with a little forethought in successional sowing and planting, may be had all the year round. The exceptionally hard weather of the last few weeks has withered up the winter greens in many cases beyond recovery, and the prices of such vegetables as are obtainable has increased enormously. To the man of small means they are quite prohibitive.

If I were asked to name the two most suitable substitutes they would not be among those vegetables already mentioned. Having regard to their food value from autumn till spring, the ease with which they may be grown, and the weight of the crops, I should vote for Parsnips and Jerusalem Artichokes. Maybe many would not agree, for these two vegetables cannot be counted popular; but this I can say without fear of dispute, that they are two of the most profitable roots the earth produce. They are both nutritious, and no vegetable is better adapted to our climate, as is evidenced by the fact that neither is subject to any serious form of disease. The two chief reasons why these vegetables are not more highly appreciated are: (1) They are often badly grown; (2) they are notoriously badly cooked. The strong flavour of the Parsnip is brought about by bad cultivation, resulting in poor, hard and stunted roots, while no vegetable is more neglected than the Jerusalem Artichoke, which is usually relegated to an odd corner of the garden and there left to take care of itself. And yet these two vegetables will produce enormous crops in any soil, and they are never known to fail where given a little care in cultivation.

### CULTIVATION OF THE PARSNIP.

It is not a question of manures, neither is it a question of soils, but the whole secret of success is deep cultivation. On shallow soils the roots are invariably stunted. The ground should be trenched at least 2ft. deep and if deeper so much the better, throwing up the soil in a rough condition in winter. It is useless to expect long, clean roots by just turning over the surface and adding manure. As a matter of fact, fresh

nature is not advisable for Parsnips, as it induces the roots to fork, particularly if placed in the upper layers of soil; and the same advice applies to Carrots and Beetrots. For this reason, these three long-rooted vegetables make good succession crops to Potatoes, and, assuming that the soil has been well treated for the Potatoes, no further animal manure should be applied. It is, however, advisable to draw deep drills and place a liberal amount of burnt refuse in them before the time of sowing. Parsnips need potash, and this will enhance the quality of the roots.

Sowing may take place any time from early March till the end of May, making the drills about 15in. apart on a fine seed bed. Sow thinly, covering the seed lightly with the back of a rake. Thin the seedlings to about 7in. apart, unless it is desired to have exhibition roots, when they should be allowed about a foot. A few of the roots may be lifted in November, after removing the soil at one end of a row with a spade to facilitate lifting without damaging the roots. However, the bulk of the roots may be left in the ground and lifted as required, for, like the Jerusalem Artichoke, they keep better in the ground than out. In hard, frosty weather the careful grower will cover the crowns with rough, dry litter as a protection. If the weather is open the remainder of the roots should be lifted about this date and stored in sandy soil in the coolest place that can be found. The roots ought not to be sliced before boiling; true, they cook quicker this way, but by so doing they become hard and more or less shrivelled up. If cooked whole, as they should be, they are more digestible and may be served as tender as a young Marrow. Three good varieties are Student, Jersey Marrow and Tender and True.

### THE JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE.

A reader of COUNTRY LIFE related in the "Correspondence" columns of a recent issue that he planted half a dozen of Jerusalem Artichokes in a very small piece of new soil. On weighing the produce of the first plant to be lifted there were 12lb. of excellent tubers. This is a very good return for the outlay of a single Artichoke, but even far heavier crops are by no means uncommon. Instead of being left to take care of themselves, as is generally the case, the tubers should be lifted during February and March, when there is no frost about. The medium-sized tubers should be selected and planted 18in. apart in rows, for preference on a fresh piece of ground, although the Jerusalem Artichoke is so accommodating that it may be successfully grown on the same site for several years, so long as the ground is enriched with decayed stable manure. The tubers should, like Potatoes, be replanted annually, and they should be so planted that the foliage may make a useful screen in summer and autumn. Give the plants a slight earthing up with the hoe when the growth is a few inches above ground, and they will require no further treatment beyond occasional hoeing until the time of lifting the crop. The tubers keep best in the soil, and if stored in a dry place they are inclined to grow out and thus lose their flavour. If in order to clear the ground they must be stored, place them in an earth clamp similar to that used for Potatoes. The variety White Sutton is preferable to the old Purple Skinned—it is of better shape and colour. Jerusalem Artichokes make excellent soup, and they may be fried like Potatoes in boiling fat. To prepare for boiling they should be washed, peeled and then rubbed with lemon to keep white and then placed direct in boiling water. So many make the mistake of placing them in cold water and boiling like Potatoes.

H. C.

## LIFE AND HUMAN NATURE AT THE FRONT

BY HENRY D. DAVRAY.

**F**OR two years past, and more particularly lately, I have had to go through various districts in France and England, and everywhere the chief thing that struck me has been the manner in which the entire industry of both nations has organised itself for the war. This is more remarkable in England than in France. With us, apart from the fact that everyone was already a soldier, we had many occasions to think of war and to remind ourselves of the importance of things military. Many localities had their citadels and fortifications, their casemates and arsenals; many towns had their circle of forts, their barracks and garrisons, so much so that at certain hours the majority of the people passing in the streets were officers and soldiers.

As soon as one lands in the England of to-day one gets an impression of the prodigious change which has been accomplished in such a short time. The military element is everywhere; soldiers, motors, wagons, guns, all sorts

of aircraft, both aeroplane and dirigibles. The white cliffs are covered with huts and tents, the hills are gashed with trenches. Everywhere the factories, which formerly produced tools and machinery, articles for domestic use or for export, are now making munitions or war materials. Abandoned workshops have been reopened, and tremble again under the vibration of machinery. In many places veritable towns of new buildings have sprung up; long rows of wooden huts between which run iron ways whereby trains bring material to the worker and take away the indescribable variety of material destined for the front. From Kent to Wales, from Sussex to the Midlands, from the Northern Counties to Scotland, it is the same. It is no longer the humanities and the classics which are taught in the ancient Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, but the knowledge indispensable to improvised officers who are going to command troops now in the camps scattered over the green slopes of the beautiful smiling English country.

No one stops. They are all building or improving continually. It is very reassuring, but one must admit that it is also very disquieting. It gives the impression that war is going to stay with us for innumerable years to come, and that we civilians also may die without seeing the end of it.

All this immense industry which one sees, followed with so much determination and energy that nothing can stem and that everything intensifies, ought to be infinitely more disquieting for the Kaiser and his party, for his now disillusioned subjects and his alarmed allies. "On les aura," as General Pétain said, repeating the words of Joan of Arc. And it is "to have them" that everyone in France as well as in England is enrolled in the gigantic effort, and that each one saves his profits, his income and his salary, and confides them to the State so that more and more rifles, bullets, guns, shells, bombs and machine guns can be made, until the Boches let go and abandon in utter rout the country which they have ravished and desecrated.

All this marvellously organised activity seems as if it ought to be for permanent use. It seems as if because of it we should henceforth live in a state of permanent war.

In the tone of his voice and his expression I could read the patriotic resolution that animated the man.

"In France, too," I replied, "we wish to have an end of Prussian militarism, and the nation has agreed to the most cruel sacrifices to annihilate if possible all future menace of war, to give the last blow to German barbarism. But," I added, pausing before the long perspective of workshops where the indefatigable machines were humming, "after the war, what will become of all this? And if peace is concluded to-morrow, what is to be done with all this fantastic accumulation of shells?" Then this Scotchman, with his powerful frame and his head crowned with hair in flaming disorder, turned towards me and fixed me with the piercing gaze of his steel grey eyes.

"My goodness," he said, "I never thought of that. It is a consideration which does not enter into my daily work. . . . What will be done with all this if peace is concluded? Oh, well. Blow it up, that's all, and go on again making motor cars."

Meantime the point is to make shells to blow up the Boches, and everything is being done so that the Allied Armies



RELIEVING TROOPS.

Some time ago I found myself in Scotland in a munition factory which had formerly been devoted to the manufacture of motors. It had been considerably enlarged and new workshops were still in course of construction, where men were putting in lathes and machine tools. From the Channel to the Grampians I saw hundreds of factories of this kind, nearly all of which had been enlarged and a considerable number entirely new, showing the enormous increase in output of production for war purposes. One thought haunted me with growing insistence before this unbelievable effort to defend the existence of the Empire. I mentioned this to the manager of a factory, a Scotch engineer, who accompanied me.

"Yes," he replied, "we thought at one time that we were making war to help Belgium and to keep our promise to France. But those are only the diplomatic causes which have assured unanimity here. Now we know that the Germans meant to go for us before long, and it is a question of life or death between them and us. I imagine that since we have increased the size of our Navy so formidably, and created armies equipped with the best material possible, it is not to make peace immediately. In them we have two good solid tools with which we are going to demolish the dream of Prussian despotism for a long time to come."

shall not want for them. One finds the same equally efficient organisation in the Army zone and right up to the front.

Ever since the day when from the Oise to the Vosges, supported on the pivot of Verdun, the French armies, helped by the heroic British Expeditionary Force, overthrew the rush of the Boches and repulsed them on the actual lines, it has been, on the Western front, a struggle for positions, a veritable siege, which seems endless to impatient souls. Little by little, as soon as they had sufficient trained men at their disposal, the British General Staff has extended its front in the district nearest its bases. The French front is still much longer. It extends from the Somme to Alsace, passing Verdun. It crosses countries as various as the Champagne and the Vosges, the Argonne and the Woerthe. But whatever the configuration of the ground, chalky plateaus or clayey plains, steep hills or mountains covered with snow in this severe season, it is everywhere the same network of roads, of rails, of means of transport of all kinds, swarming with men who have no other actual work than to resist the enemy and to prepare for a future offensive.

Modern warfare has become a business, with the regularity, the organisation, the co-ordination of departments, the division of labour, the order and method, the routine even, without which no business can be conducted successfully.

Several millions of men are there, in the zone of the armies, incessantly occupied in one grim task. The pictures of actual warfare scarcely remind us of those we have carried in our minds gleaned from what we have learnt in school books, the stories of historians, or from pictures of past battles where the generals caracol on horseback surrounded by aides-de-camp and messengers, and where regiments in multi-coloured uniforms fire at each other from a few hundred yards' range. These pictures of warfare are as obsolete as the wars of the Medes and Persians against Greece as those of the Roman legions against the barbarian hordes.

The way in which the public is informed of what occurs at the front does not sufficiently show the actual conditions of the war. The great offensives, and even the smaller attacks, are only incidents rendered possible by the most formidable labour, and preparations of which no one can form a complete idea. It is a war of engineers, of men of science, organisers, chemists and mechanics, a war of railways and lorries, of automobiles and "Tanks," a war where men do not march, but where they are transported almost to the spot where they go to ground in their trenches and dug-outs. Joffre, like Kitchener, is an engineer, and he has been called "The Great Station Master" because of the marvellous use he made of the French railway resources during his famous strategic retreat which ended in the victory of the Marne.

So that the public can understand that the daily *communiqués* can only give an imperfect and false idea of what is happening, it must be repeated without ceasing that the present war differs in every respect from any previous war, even the most desperate and the longest. When the *communiqué* says "Nothing to report on the entire front," the readers of the newspapers cannot imagine that from Belfort to Nieuport several millions of men are performing their daily task, that from General Headquarters to the trenches this swarming mass of men is directed with order and method for a concerted end. The aeroplanes have flown, the cannon have thundered, the troops of the first line trenches have been relieved and have reached their huts, the resting troops have come to replace them, the long revictualling trains, loaded with provisions, with materials, munitions, are arriving at the railhead, where await them the convoys of lorries which disperse their loads in all directions to supply this multitude of men with food, equipment, arms, munitions, tools and utensils of a thousand kinds where they have to be continually supplied.

When we are told what the war costs daily we are astonished without thinking much about it; but anyone who has been to the front and followed in all its ramifications the complicated network of this siege organisation has very little cause for surprise, and only hopes that the War Loan will amount to many millions.

The front is like an enormous gulf which swallows the prodigious and costly quantity of goods produced by England and France without mentioning those which come from America. Just imagine what this variety of goods means, from the personal requirements of the soldier, from soap to needles, to locomotives and the tools and instruments for every conceivable trade. There are districts, like the Vosges, where means of transport have had to be improvised, adapted to the steep slopes and difficulties of the site, and the engineers have accomplished a veritable *tour de force*. Everywhere else, in Lorraine as in Champagne, around Verdun as in Picardy, they must maintain and often widen the railways and the existing roads, rapidly worn out under heavy traffic; all along the front without ceasing they build and build new roads for lorries and new standard and narrow-gauge railways.

In this way before the German lines powerful works have been established intended in the first place for an unshakable defensive, and soon to serve for an offensive, in the success of which both officers and men have the most absolute confidence. But the construction of all these works, of these roads and railways, has nothing in it of the picturesque, and the war correspondents hardly trouble to mention them, since their readers do not find them interesting. Future historians, however, ought to give every importance to all this organisation and to these preparations. For here, again, the inventive spirit and the improvising talents of the French have been of the utmost value. Many remarkable examples have been cited. Great ingenuity is exercised in disguising the guns and the batteries; the munition depôts the defence works, and even the roads are disguised. For this work corps of *camoufleurs* have been recruited among the artists whom mobilisation has made soldiers; painters, sculptors, designers, vie with each other in ingenuity to disguise the guns and the carriages, the wagons and their tilts with

variegated colours, to invent all sorts of devices to hide from the telescopes of the enemy and the cameras of their aviators that which it is desirable they should not know. And these artists, faithful to the joyous traditions of the Quartier Latin and Montmartre, have a fruitful imagination when it comes to the mystification of the Boche. While busying themselves with these works of art, which were hardly foreseen during the teaching of "*l'école*," or while resting behind the lines, these artists, some of whom are already famous, continue to model in clay, to record in their sketch books the impressions, serious or amusing, of the incidents which daily pass before their eyes. And it is by these means that their exhibits have been brought together this year again for the Salon de la Guerre, where there are so many picturesque and unexpected things. Our photographs are reproduced from this exhibition, which is being brought to London.

As authors and journalists have been mobilised also, we are indebted to them for those newspapers from the front, edited with so much verve and good humour, printed haphazard, sometimes on the printing press of the little billeting town and sometimes simply manifoladed. The collection is very curious, and already much sought after. Some of these authors do not limit their literary production to these more or less fantastic collaborations. Some of the best books of the war have been written under shell-fire, such as the powerful work of Henri Barbusse, "*Le Feu*," awarded a prize some weeks ago by the Académie Goncourt.

Many others, without pretensions to literature, also write. They write quite simply to their parents, to friends, all that flows from their hearts, or, without emotion, they tell of facts as if of the most ordinary events and as if it were natural to accomplish acts of heroism and to risk their lives at any hour of the day or night. Without doubt they will add several pages to the literary patrimony of their country which will not perish. Several collections of these letters have been published, unfortunately nearly all of them posthumous, and they are precious witnesses of the nobility and greatness of soul of these young men who knowingly sacrificed to La Patrie lives full of promise. In France the parents of the dead and missing are informed individually and no lists of losses are published, as is done here, so it is difficult to estimate the total of those who have made the great sacrifice; but if we have not the figures, which are undoubtedly more than a million, we know that the flower of our youth has paid a heavy tribute to war. The Roll of Honour in our great schools and our universities grows sadly long, and it is not without a poignant regret that one thinks, while reading the letters of these young men, professors—savants, writers, artists, men of science, of all their intelligence and their energy could have accomplished for the good of humanity, that they have not been permitted to accomplish.

But no considerations of this kind can lessen the ardour of those at the front, and the young men of nineteen or twenty go out with all the enthusiasm of their elders in 1914, and the hope of speedy victory. On the front the *moral* continues to be marvellously good, and the hope is growing among the "*Poilus*" that the next great push shall sweep the invaders to the other side of the Rhine. To give my readers some idea of what those at the front really think, I have been permitted to quote some passages from a recent letter written by an officer in the Regular Army, who has been fighting since the first day of the war :

Since you wrote to me my battalion has made three attacks and I have been wounded for the second time without having to retire. I have been decorated directly by the general commanding the Army Corps. I swim in sticky, cold mud, and I envy you, who are able to write at a table, with warm feet. . . .

If you want a general impression here it is. First we kill the Boches, and that is something. We always attack successfully when it is done without hurrying, and we take prisoners easily when we have to deal with any regiment that is badly commanded. That is how the first attack of my battalion came about. We had taken five German lines. At my last operation we had before us a regiment of Saxon Grenadiers who had stood the blow well. Wherever young officers were stationed the enemy resisted; where the officers had disappeared, the troops surrendered. To me our infantry appeared to overpower the German infantry absolutely. In the close intimacy which is engendered on the field of battle the natural ingenuousness of our men, has full play and enables them to obtain great results. . . . On the whole our men continue to have *du cran*, always *du cran*, and even a battalion like mine, which has lost fifty per cent. of its effective, in officers as well as men, easily reconstructs itself and becomes a fine combatant unit. Our supply of subalterns is inexhaustible. I have a nucleus of section leaders which is perhaps superior to those we had at the beginning. They are young men, keen, endowed with an imperturbable phlegm, and above everything, having an audacious initiative which shows them the best means of taking advantage of any favourable situation. During an attack in September I saw some beautiful and surprising things,

such as this, for example: Our men had captured a *flammenwerfer*, which was immediately employed to grill a group of Boches who were resisting obstinately in a strong dug-out; meanwhile one of my young section leaders quietly fixed up his machine gun to polish off the Boches who were escaping by an outlet on the enemy's side.

I have seen, too, a soldier who, having taken twenty prisoners single-handed, assemble them, indifferent to bombardment, on the parapet of the trench, line them up, disarm them, march down the line collecting in his held-out helmet their knives and other possessions, and then march them to the rear as if on parade. This soldier has since received the *médaille militaire*. It is things of this sort, of which I am the daily witness, which make me admire the "Poilu," that "Poilu" of the formidable *moral*, which represents our beautiful Old France so well.

One last incident: One day, in approaching the skirts of a wood which we had only taken after a severe struggle, and which we were only occupying under the violent fire of the Boches a few mètres away, I saw my men—or the survivors—each making himself some hot chocolate. I must tell you that we had taken a Boche dug-out and had found a number of cases of Swiss chocolate, chafing dishes, solidified alcohol, mineral waters, apricots and *gnole* (brandy), but, to the great regret of the men, no *pinard* (wine). Surely you will find that our good English comrades have nothing to reproach us with on the score of phlegm?

The success of our English friends does not surprise me at all. Some say that their new armies have not "the tradition." I believe that it is just that which makes their strength, for they do not hesitate to accept new methods at once, and they will have the initiative to want to get the utmost out of unforeseen circumstances. I admire them and envy them that they still have young men of solid physique. They are nearly up to the standard of our soldiers.

On our front in France we have, English and French, a marvellous instrument of attack. I believe that when the English have acquired sufficient experience to use their artillery to the utmost effect—that is to say, when they understand that it is not enough merely to fire incessantly and to use a vast quantity of ammunition, but more especially to fire accurately by making absolutely correct adjustments—I believe that then their attacks will be literally a military walk-over and that they will have very little trouble in reducing the poor infantry which the Boches are preparing for the spring attack.

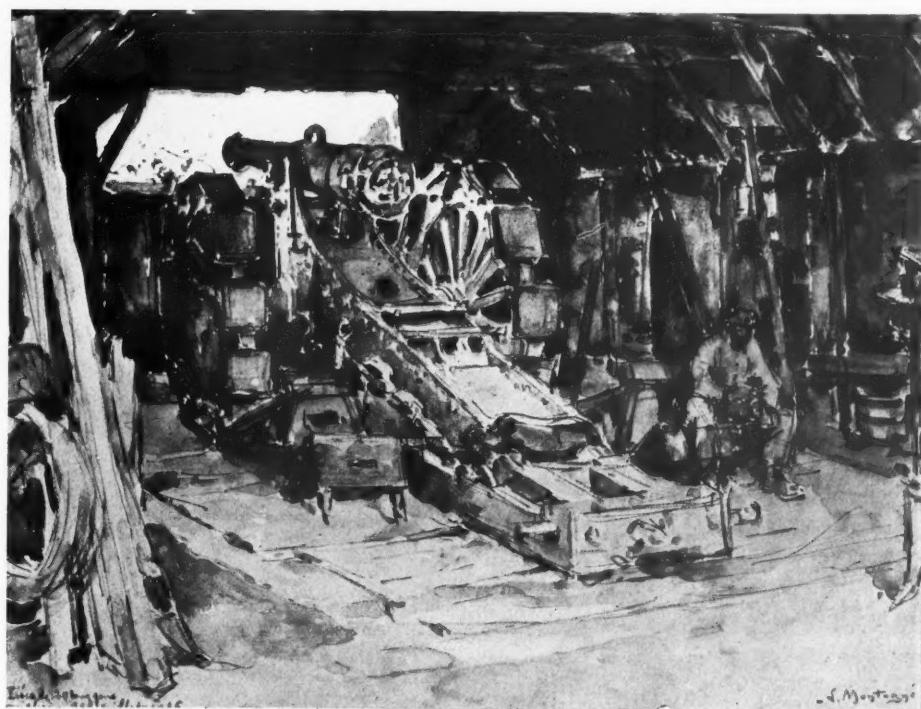
There is no need to comment on these lines, in which a French officer says what he thinks of his men, of his "English comrades" and of the enemy. Let us hope that in the spring—that is to say, within a few weeks—he will have the joy of leading his troops to victory.



A SENTRY ON THE ROAD TO PERVYSE.



THE TELEPHONIST.

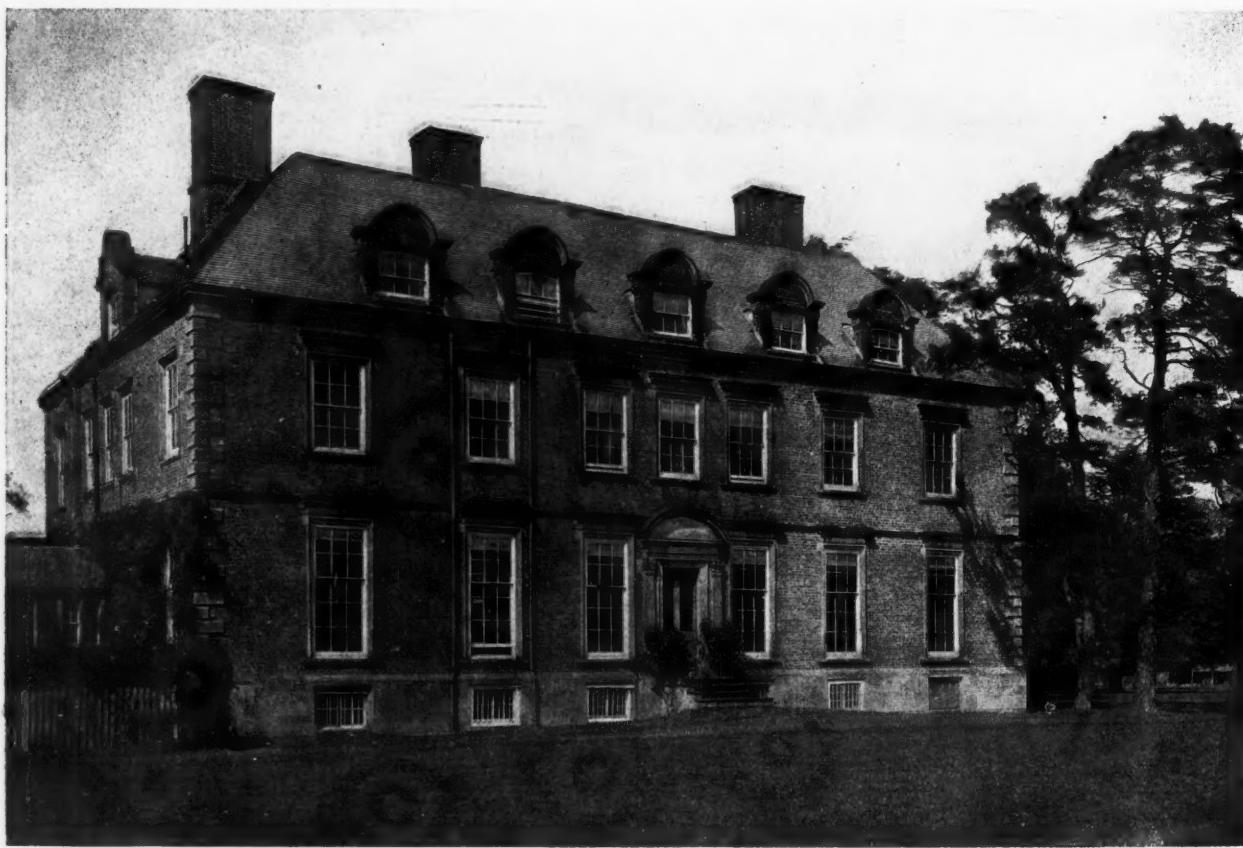


A "120" LONG GUN IN ITS SHELTER.



THE Manor of Longnor is connected with one of the salient incidents in the mediæval history of Powis Castle—with the stalwart defence of that stronghold by Hawys "Gadarn" against her uncle Gruffydd de la Pole in 1312. In the beginning of that year the manor was certainly one of his possessions although it is not clear when it became so. Under Henry II it was held, under the important border family of le Strange, by Alaric "Sprencheaux," and under Henry III his descendant, Roger, grants Longnor Mill to Haughmond Abbey "in pure and perpetual almoign," the charter being witnessed by Sir John le Strange as well as by a Corbet and a Leighton. This Roger we also find joining the King in an expedition to Brittany in 1230, and a score of years later his son, another Roger, receives certain privileges so long as he is faithful to the Crown and in the service of Gruffydd ap Gwenwynwyn. This Gruffydd was the first prince of Powys to come under English influence and assume the surname of de la Pole. His wife was Hawys le Strange, and he thus had family as well as military relationship with the landowners along the Marches, such as the le Stranges and the Sprengholes, whose business it was to maintain the English ascendancy against the Welsh native party. They were likewise partizans of the King against the barons, and so we find a third Roger Sprenghole serving under John le Strange on the Royal side in the campaign which ended in 1265 at Evesham with the defeat and death of Simon de Montfort. Roger was thus a *persona grata* with Henry III and Prince Edward. He

obtained other estates and served as sheriff of his county. But with him the connection of his family with Longnor ceases, for it was at the disposal of the younger Gruffydd de la Pole in 1312. His elder brother had succeeded their father, had accepted the Powysland fief as an English barony and left it to his daughter Hawys, who married John de Cherleton. All this we have seen when dealing with the history of Powis Castle (February 3rd), and how Gruffydd found it to his interest to return to the native Welsh view that a woman could not succeed. When Edward II got into trouble with his barons over Piers Gaveston, Gruffydd thought the moment had come to strike for his patrimony. To raise and arm a force of native Welsh needed money, and his interest in Longnor was worth something. So we find that in the year that he laid siege to Powis Castle he disposed of Longnor to his first cousin, Sir Fulk le Strange; and Mr. Eyton in his "Antiquities of Shropshire," tells us that the "transfer of his Shropshire lands and effects was, I think, a mere sale suggested and necessitated by his circumstances of the moment." Sir Fulk left Longnor to a younger son from whom it passed to co-heiresses. One of these married John Careles, who thus obtained a moiety of the manor which, as well as other Careles estates, came through marriage with a Careles heiress in Henry IV's time to John Corbett of Habberley. "From these two persons," says Mr. Eyton, "descended the line of Corbett of Longnor, one of whom, Thomas Corbett, re-consolidated the manor in the reign of James I by purchasing that moiety which more than two



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1.—LONGNOR HALL: SOUTH FRONT.

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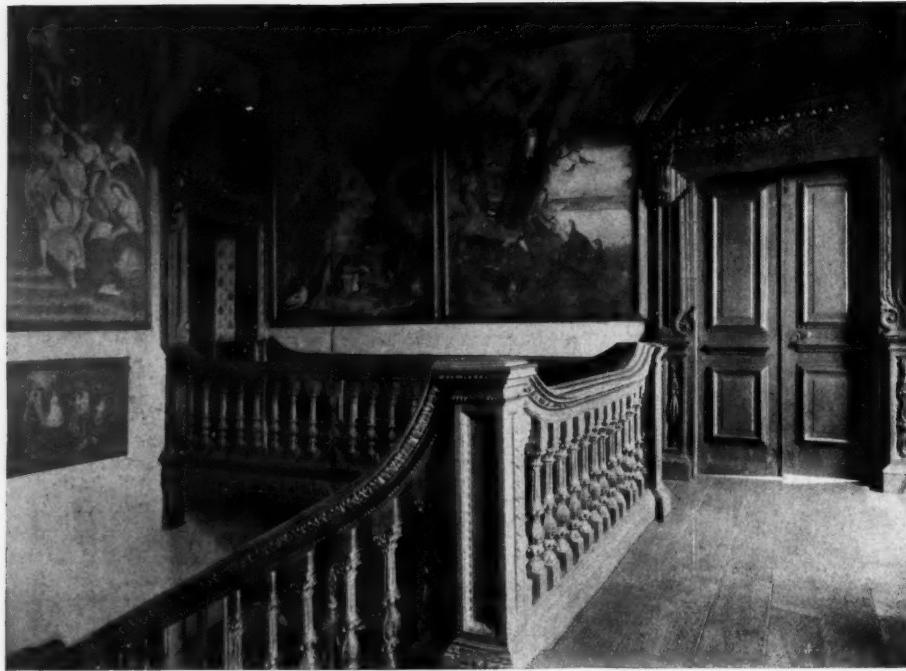


2.—THE STAIRCASE.

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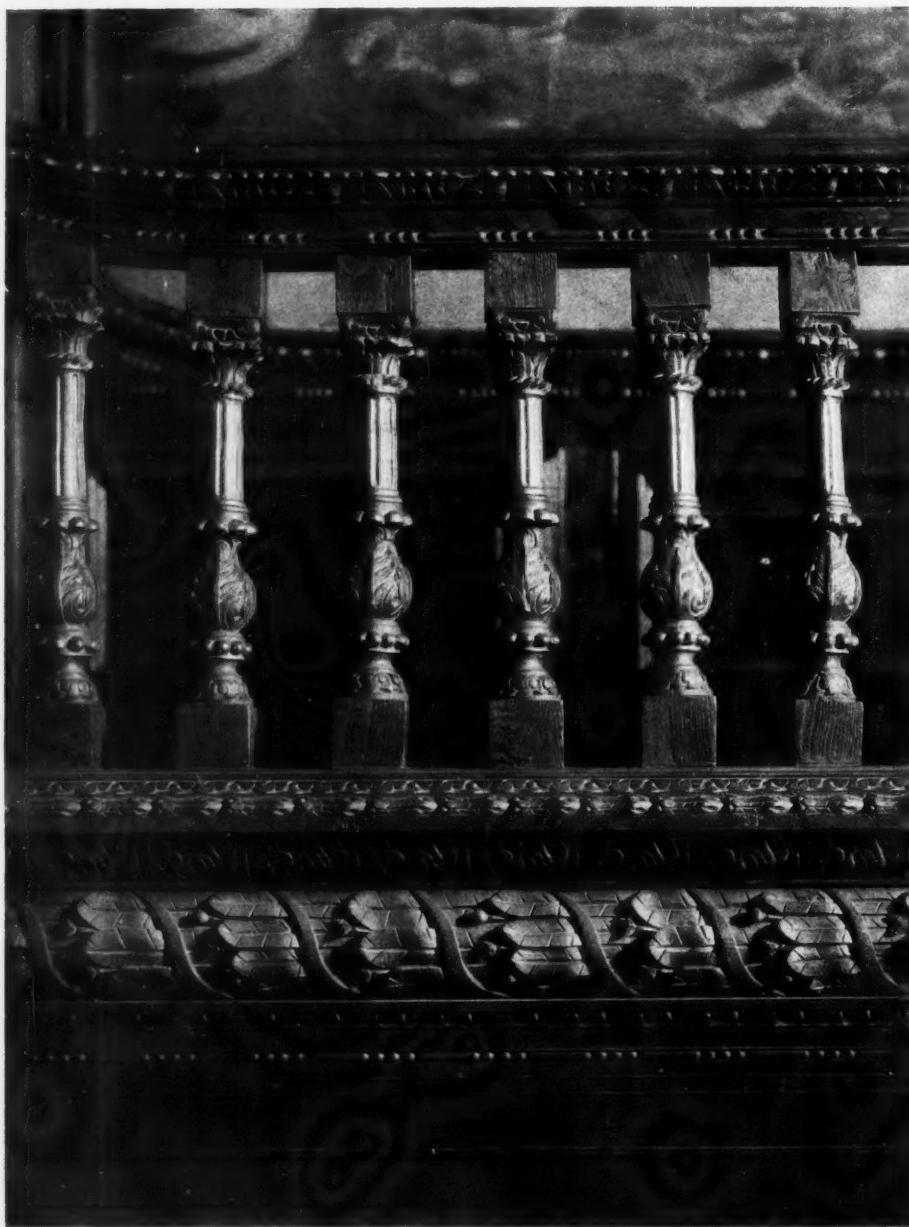
[Feb. 17th, 1917.]



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3.—FIRST FLOOR LANDING.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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4.—DETAIL OF STAIRCASE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

"centuries before" had gone to the other le Strange heiress. Roger Fitz-Corbet held Caus Castle and other Shropshire Manors in the Conqueror's time. His descendants spread and prospered in the county, the Moreton Corbet branch being the most important in late mediæval as in present times. From this stock came John of Habberley, whose descendants are called "of Longnor" implying residence there. Thus when in Henry VIII's time Leland went from Stretton to Leebotwood he "leaves a Parke of Mr. Corbets harde on the left hand." Thomas Corbett, who reunited the estate, died in 1645, aged 85, and seven years later his widow (who had been an heiress, which may account for the purchase of the other moiety of the manor) closed her eyes at the Old Hall of Longnor. It stood on the rising ground that lies east of the Cound stream where we still find the church and the mill pools. From the other bank stretches a broad low-lying flat, enclosed as a deer park. It is set with fine timber—there are poplars and alders of exceptional size—and its long expanse of level green carries the eye delightfully to the bold outline of Caradoc, an outline of the Stretton Hills, a few miles to the south. The present house, built by Thomas Corbett's great-grandson under Charles II, is set on this flat which lent itself excellently to the formal water gardens then in vogue, but unlike many a low situation it has a wide and picturesque outlook.

Three years before Thomas Corbett's demise his son Edward was made a baronet. This shows that he favoured the Royal side in the quarrel between Charles and his Parliament which was just passing from the sphere of words to that of the sword. But he took no active part and suffered little from being on the losing side. When a Parliamentary committee set to work to raise money from its opponents according to the value of their estates, Sir Edward was assessed at the high figure of £2,000, the same as Lord Powis, and twice as much as Corbet of Moreton Corbet, and as Ottley of Pitchford, close by. But it does not appear that the £2,000 was ever paid. In 1648 information reached the committee that he was a delinquent, but that his estate was not sequestered nor had he compounded. The county commissioners were therefore ordered to examine into his delinquency, but whether they did so and what was the upshot does not appear. His



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5.—THE DRAWING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

father had married a co-heiress, so also did he, and so did his grandson and successor, Sir Richard, the second baronet. Thus, after the Restoration the latter found himself in a position to re-house himself amply and richly in the taste of his day. Longnor Hall, especially as regards its interior, remains very much as he left it, and is one of the best examples we have of the home of a well-to-do country gentleman under Charles II. It is on a small scale what Tredegar House (*COUNTRY LIFE*, December 5th, 1908) is on a large scale, and the detail of doorways, mantelpieces and wainscoting should be compared. But there is a still closer resemblance, with the same difference in scale, between the Longnor staircase (Fig. 2) and that at Powis Castle. Baluster and newel post, string-course and hand-rail are almost identical, and there is the same inlaid treatment of the treads. Indeed, the lesser example at Longnor exceeds its lordly neighbour over the Welsh border in the richness of this detail. The whole is in walnut veneer, each tread has a chequer edge, and the landings have in light wood inlay elaborate geometric designs or the intricate cypher of Sir Richard and his wife which we also find in raised work on the drawing-room ceiling (Fig. 5). The date 1668 has been noted at Powis Castle. On the soffit of the entrance doorway at Longnor (Fig. 10) the year 1670 is incised. The influence of neighbourhood

between the two estates has already been mentioned; and, moreover, Sir Edward Corbett, through his wife, Margaret Waties, had obtained the manor of Leighton in Montgomeryshire, and it went to his descendants. A study of the similar work done at the same time at the two houses leads to the surmise that the same designer and craftsmen were employed at both. At Powis Castle the surviving work of the period is limited to the staircase and the state chamber. At Longnor it is everywhere and complete, save small changes and the redecoration of the library towards the close of the eighteenth century. The house follows the typical plan of its day with slight modifications. That plan, which prevailed from Charles II's to George II's time, was mentioned, when Compton Place was under review last autumn, as having "two vast rooms, a hall and a saloon, set back to back and occupying the centre of the house, with parlours on each side of less depth, so as to accommodate staircase halls between them." That arrangement prevails at Longnor, except that the depth of the house admits of only very narrow staircases between the side rooms; and a great central chimney-stack takes up the same amount of space between hall and saloon, which are, therefore, no deeper than the side rooms. Moreover, Sir Richard, desiring an exceptionally ample and rich staircase for the size of his house besides the two little



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'C.L.'



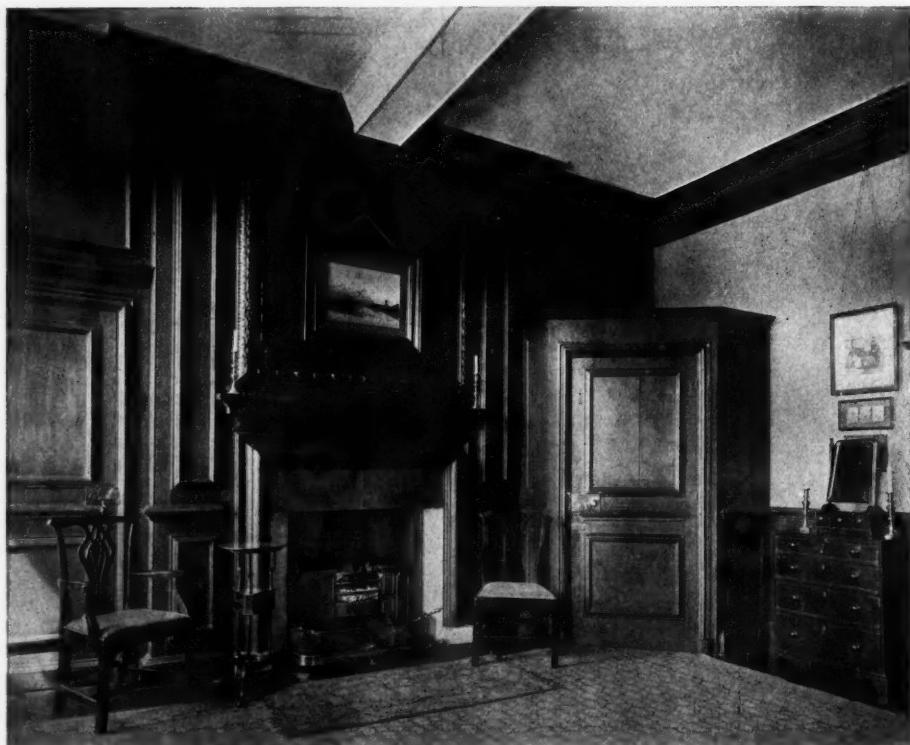
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7.—THE ENTRANCE HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

normal ones, had to use part of his central space on the south side for it. He therefore made his hall on the north front unusually long—it is about 45ft. by 20ft.—but limited the length of his saloon or drawing-room on the south side to some 27ft., leaving the remaining space for his staircase. Like the Morgans of Tredegar in their large manner, so did Sir Richard on a lesser scale find cash enough to treat his whole house with enriched wainscoting and elaborate woodwork. In the entrance hall (Fig. 7) he showed restraint. The mantelpiece is merely a moulded shelf with three panels above it, and the wainscoting has no enrichment to any of its members from floor to ceiling. There are, however, great pedimented doorways, closely resembling those on the Powis Castle landing, that give presence and dignity to the room. But in the staircase hall he let himself go. The detail of the staircase (Fig. 4) shows every member enriched with carving, except one which has inlay. On the wall side the scheme of newel post and balustrade is balanced with wainscoting following the same lines and decoration. Both on the ground and first floors there are elaborate pedimented

cases to the double doors. In design these have a serious fault. The space they take makes the wall newel post and the lower section of the door-frame one and the same. The designer probably never knew that this would happen. He will have drawn the two features as separate and independent, and the craftsman was left to solve the problem. He decided to finish with an unmodified newel post, and stop the door-case scheme at its top. For the sake of balance he repeated this on the other side of the doorway, where, the newel post excuse failing, the fault of design is very apparent. Longnor belongs to a transition period. The later Renaissance had come, so far as the theoretic adoption of strictly classic rules was concerned, but some of the traditional liberty accorded to the craftsman as a Gothic legacy to the early Renaissance period yet remained. Wren and Grinling Gibbons were imposing the law of more learned design and more delicate execution, but their influence was only beginning to be felt, even in London, and had not reached the country in Sir Richard's time. The general effect at Longnor is so extremely agreeable and satisfying that one seldom pauses to pick holes in details. Every room is a joy.



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8.—A BEDROOM.

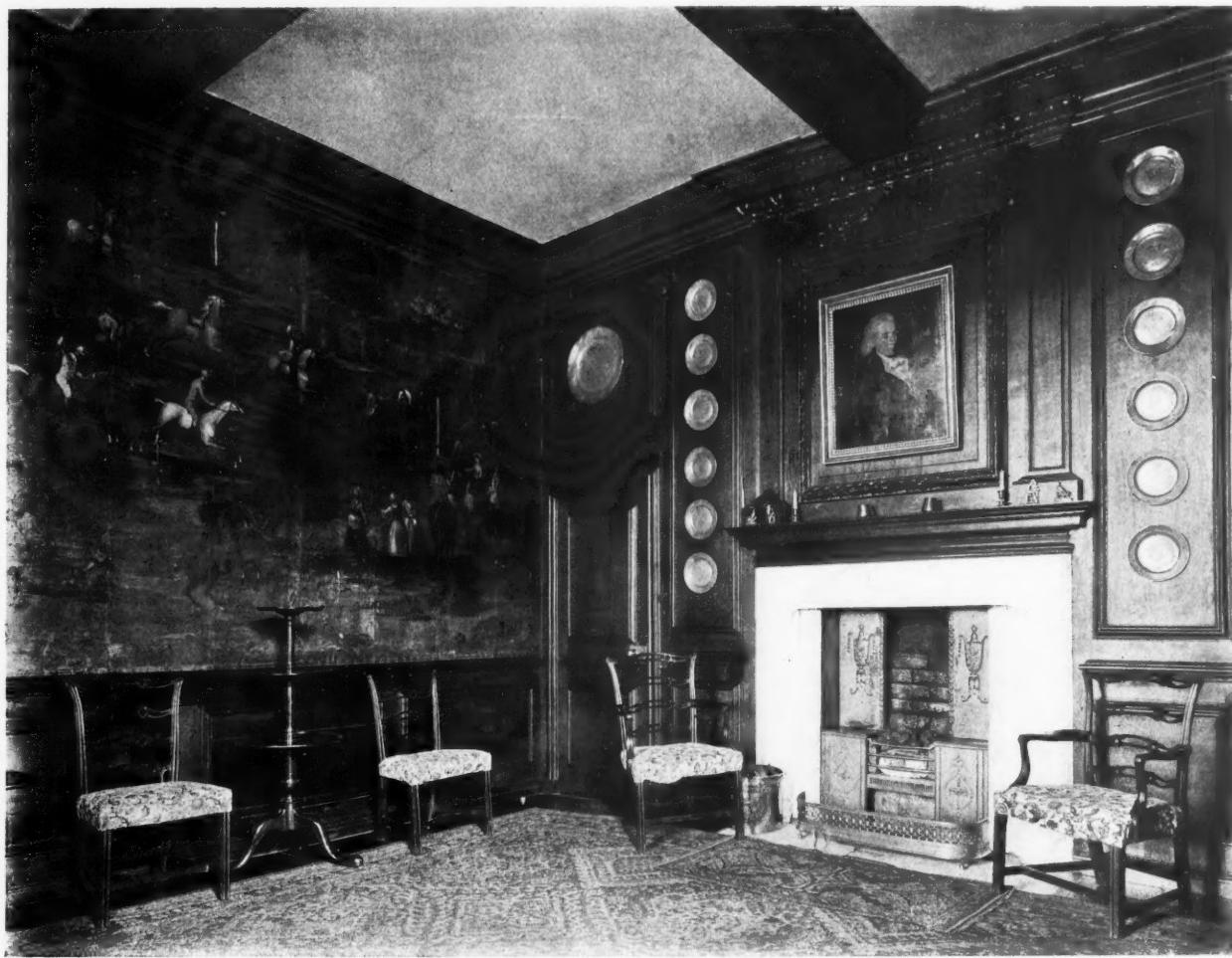
"COUNTRY LIFE."

Even upstairs we get chamber after chamber of bold wainscoting—certain wall spaces being left for tapestry—with enrichment to mark out the fireplace section and, perchance, with such a picturesque incident as an interior porch (Fig. 8). Downstairs the ornament is more pronounced. The drawing-room door-cases (Fig. 5) with their broken architraves remind one of John Webb's work at Thorpe and Tyttenhanger and bear likeness to those on the ground floor of the Powis Castle staircase. The mantelpiece has in simple form and workmanship the swag and drop which Grinling Gibbons had begun to treat with splendour. The dining-room, which occupies the south-east corner of the house, has even simpler, if similar, treatment of its mantelpiece, while its walls had three spaces (one on each side of the window, and one occupying all the west side of the room except the doorway into the drawing-room) left for tapestry. Sir Richard, second baronet, either lacked tapestry for the purpose, or what he hung there was not approved by his grandson, Sir Richard, fourth baronet, for the latter put up painted leather decorations. The largest (Fig. 9) depicts a horse race of early Hanoverian

Bart. and Mr Richard Crumpton thro' fflanders, Brabant, Holland and some part of Germany and Switzerland" is preserved at Longnor. The tour proved prosperous enough, for the little misadventure with which it began was of frequent occurrence in the then state of the roads:

On Monday y<sup>e</sup> 5th of April 1683, we took<sup>d</sup> coach in London for Dover, and about 3 miles before we came to Dover by an overture of y<sup>e</sup> Coach I had my right shoulder displaced. I had it put in its place by Eldrich y<sup>e</sup> Chirurgio, which with being bleded in y<sup>e</sup> other arm cost me 14d.

After his return home he was in a position to look high for a wife, and married Lady Mildred Cecil, daughter of the Earl of Salisbury. Kneller's portraits of herself and members of her family hang in the Longnor drawing-room. The illustration shows a three-quarter length of Lady Mildred Corbett and, to the right, an oval of her mother as a widow, "the countenance dejected but extremely beautiful," as Pennant describes her; adding that she is dressed in "very picturesque weeds." On the opposite wall hangs another of her daughters and the latter's husband, Lord Ranalagh. Whether Sir Uvedale found the house completed when he succeeded is uncertain. Probably not, as the arms within the



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9.—IN THE DINING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

time, and the other two a stag hunt and a wrestling match respectively. The squire and his family look on at the wrestling which takes place in front of the Blue Boar Inn, and on its sign are the initials I.P. 1723. The date is, no doubt, that when these leather hangings were painted, but who I.P. may indicate is not clear, unless they were added later by Joseph Plymley who succeeded in 1804, and whose list of the pictures at Longnor attributes the work to Abraham Hondius, but on what authority is not stated, and like other attributions in the list it may be conjectural.

The portrait of the builder of the house hangs over the hall fireplace (Fig. 7). Having served as Sheriff of his county and member for his county town he died in 1683 at the age of 43. His wife, Victoria, co-heiress of Sir William Uvedale, had predeceased him. Their son was only fifteen years old when he became Sir Uvedale Corbett. Three years later he went on the Continental tour which then usually completed the rich young man's education; and his manuscript account of "The Voyages of Sir Uvedale Corbett

cartouche over the entrance doorway are Corbett impaling Cecil. The only documentary evidence of the date of the building is to be found in a family deed, dated 1689. The portion of the park chosen by Sir Richard as the site of his new house and garden included enclosures and fish stews that were part of his mother's jointure, and appear to have remained so during his lifetime; for it is only on her grandson coming of age that she executes the release of this ground described as that "upon which the present Hall of Longnor has just been built." The presence of the fish stews influenced the plan of the lay-out in which canals and other formal water incidents were dominant features. All were afterwards swept away, but fortunately careful bird's-eye views of them were made before their destruction.

Sir Uvedale, who is said to have injured his health by chemical experiments, had an even shorter span of life than his father, for he was succeeded in 1701 by a boy of five who lived under five sovereigns and was the last of the male line of Corbett to hold Longnor. His father had settled it on him "hoping he will be so provident as to improve and not

lessen what his ancestors have taken such care to convey to him." This instruction he respected and during his long ownership he altered little, but he maintained and, anyhow in the estimation of his contemporaries, improved. The very charming library (Fig. 6) in the Adam manner is likely to have been decorated by him rather than by his successor, and has not since been altered except by the addition of a quite appropriate ceiling of the period. At the same time the open fireplaces were filled in with a good and interesting series of hob grates, showing much variety but equal excellence of design. Less praiseworthy was the cutting down of the Charles II window apertures to nearly the floor level, and the introduction of new sashes with thin sash-bars. The originals were either the wooden casements which were still prevalent in Charles II's time, or the thick barred sashes which were then being introduced, and became universal under William III. The exterior of the house suffers somewhat from this change and still more from a later tampering with the pediment and dormers of the roof, so much so that no view is given of the north elevation, which has been the chief sufferer.

Sir Richard, fourth baronet, never married, and for an heir he had to fall back on the descendants of the first baronet's youngest son, called Waties, after his mother's surname. Waties Corbett had a grandson, Thomas, who became a bookseller in

London, and was the father of Charles Corbett, who was deemed so unsatisfactory that he was entirely passed over in the re-settlement of the estate which Sir Richard was able to effect. Charles Corbett's effort to upset that settlement failed, but he quite legitimately assumed the title, though it may not have entirely consoled with his vocation of clerk in a lottery office. He had had an aunt,

Jane, who became wife to John Flint, and to their elder son, Robert Flint, Longnor passed in 1774, on condition of his assuming the name of Corbett. Failing his issue, his brother, and then the son of his sister Diana came next in succession. Even in Sir Richard's time Diana and her husband, Joseph Plymley, had occupied the pleasant red brick house that stands, as does the church, on the rising ground east of the Cound brook, and is therefore called "The Bank." They were friends of Pennant who made their home a stepping stone for his Welsh Tours, and who thus has something to say, as we have seen, on the subject of Longnor and its pictures. He mentions The Bank as "the house of my respected old friend Joseph Plymley Esq and near it is *Longnor Hall*, the seat of Robert Corbet Esq." At The Bank the Plymley children were brought up. Among them was a daughter, Catherine, who from 1791 to 1830 kept a diary consisting of over 200 little volumes, like penny account books, fitting into a box with a view of Longnor Hall on the lid, and now preserved at Condover Hall near by. There is much local gossip, but little respecting any incidents happening at Longnor Hall beyond the grand funeral which took place when Robert Corbett (Flint) died, and the burning of one of the chimney stacks—a sham one made of wood, which had been placed in the central well to match a real one and complete the

symmetrical design. As to the Hall we hear more from her brother and eventual owner of the estate. Robert Corbett died in 1804 and was succeeded by his brother John, who followed him two years later. Both dying childless, the succession devolved on their sister Diana's son, Archdeacon Plymley, whose portrait occupies a prominent position on the wall that separates the hall (Fig. 9) from the library. In his notes on Longnor Hall we hear of one, Atwood, who played the violin at the Winter Theatre in London and painted portraits. "He often passed his Summers at this house, painting for the last Sir Richard Corbett. He taught my mother and my eldest uncle to draw." These were the young Flints who must have been *habitues* of their cousin's house, and the result of Atwood's tuition may be seen in a series of volumes of most delicate and accurate coloured drawings of birds done by Robert Flint, and very much considered at the time, especially by Pennant. But a still more interesting result of Atwood's sojourns are four small watercolours, described by Archdeacon Plymley as "representing the outbuildings and gardens as they were in Sir R. Corbett's time. My uncle took down some of these buildings, but I removed the offices and kitchen garden."

The present immediate environment of Longnor Hall is characterless and uninteresting. The park comes up almost to the windows on the east and south sides.

To the west a narrow strip of grass and border leads to the later kitchen gardens in front of the stables and farm buildings. On the north side a dull carriage "sweep" is set with conifers and oval flower-beds. But the original lay-out was full of charm and incident. Lineable with the house to east and west at the end of raised walks were garden houses. To the north within formal hedges were fountain and pools flanked by canals



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10.—THE ENTRANCE DOOR.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

and topiary work. On the south side was a centre of parterre work with bowling green to the west of it and a narrow kitchen garden to the east, while beyond this intimate and detailed region stretched broadly out towards distant Caradoc a long grass walk bordered by an avenue. As we saw at Powis Castle, such delightful garden schemes were in "wretched taste" according to Pennant, quite an arbiter of taste in his day; and his pernicious views were instilled, with rueful result, in the minds of his friends, the Flints and the Plymleys.

It would appear that Atwood was not the only "tame cat" artist favoured by Sir Richard who, as a young man, had been sent on the usual tour to France and Italy. One Atkiss, a son of his steward, painted pictures for Longnor, but, not being a great success, a place was got for him in the Customs. Some, if not all, of the paintings on the staircase are by him. There was no Lansdowne employed here, as at Powis Castle, to cover walls and ceiling with gods and goddesses. But something in humble imitation was attempted. A great canvas of impersonated Arts and Virtues, either standing on terra firma or wafted on clouds, occupies the main space on the wall facing the windows (Fig. 3). But more interesting are two pictures of birds, the background of one of which gives another representation of the Hall and gardens as they were before the evil hand of the

landscapist and of the Victorian improver fell upon them. Fortunately the damage done was slight and is reparable. It will be simple to get the roof details once more as they were, and were meant to be. New gardens may well take something of the form if not the large extent of the old, of which the lines and details are still in a measure traceable. But even without such "counsels of perfection" as the war

has universally relegated to a doubtful future, Longnor Hall is to-day a choice survival of the fine moment in the annals of our domestic architecture when it was created. Its worth is fully appreciated by its present owner, a great-grandson of the Archdeacon, and by his son, Mr. Trevor Corbett, who has recently taken up his residence within its sympathetic walls.

H. AVRAY TIPPING.

## A WINTER'S DAY WALK

**O**N either side of Boxmoor Bridge the canal stretches silent and frozen. Its dark waters, the highway of the barges that ply their leisurely traffic between the Midlands and London hidden beneath a coverlet of snowy ice, the barges themselves, the bargees and all that is theirs gone, as if, like other denizens of the canal, they had sought refuge from the frost in the mud below. The tow-path runs high on the west bank, a narrow gleaming ridge in the sunlight that seems in the universal whiteness half snowlight. It tempts one's feet northward in search of the vanished barges. The whole world seems to have succumbed to the cold. Here and there a plough frozen in its furrow on the arable shows good intent frustrated by the weather. Now and again a cluster of sheep show like a smudge on the dazzling snow; wide-spreading farm buildings appear to crouch closer to the ground under its pressure. In a paddock cattle nose over some hay on the ground and some young beasts come down to the canal to drink at a hole barely big enough to take one thirsty muzzle at a time.

The frozen waterway sweeps on under a close succession of bridges and through innumerable locks, the stairway whereby it climbs to the busy Midland plateau. These canal bridges are rather entertaining. Very short, since neither floods nor marshy approach have to be considered, high arched to admit of the passage of tall loads beneath, and plastered with white stucco, or so it appears. It imparts an air of smug virtue

SILENT AND FROZEN.

to them that might appal, but in truth succeeds in charming. As for the locks, a book might be written about them, or, better still, a poem of the more sinister sort. The thin jet of water that still spouts through the gates to lose itself with a stream of bubbles beneath the ice gives warning of mischief pent behind. The levers of the gates are massive oak timbers roughly planed and as old as the canal itself. The bollards along the edge are sections of oak trunks. Probably they were originally roughly shaped to hold a pulling barge, but years of wear and many ropes have worn them into shiny-surfaced inverted cones. The little cottages that mark the locks are eloquent of the decay of the waterway. Once each sheltered a busy lock-keeper, but now their windows are blind and their chimneys cold, though at one or two a bed of leggy greens freezing in mid-air show that someone still tends the garden plots.

Not until Berkhamsted comes in sight do the first barges show themselves. But above the bridge they lie, real barges, "painted and gay," the *Valerie*, the *Polly* and the *Patience*, smoke curling up from their chimney pipes and a fine selection of bargee's lingerie hanging on lines from stem to stern. The childish impulse that used to prompt us to turn over snail shells to see if there was a snail at home takes us down the steps towards the *Valerie* to discover the occupants of the barges, if possible. There is a scutter and a thump, and a huge brown dog springs up with his fore feet on the sideboards of the *Patience* and raves defiance. An elderly



A FARMYARD BY THE CANAL.

woman, very square and hard, with a green sunbonnet on her head, appears on board the *Valerie*. Heaven forbid that it is named after her. We try to speak. The dog deafens us. The lady lifts a voice like a megaphone.

"The path's the other side. This is private," she proudly says, and, as a kindly afterthought, "But anything you want to know the dog'll tell you."

Then she folds her arms on her chest and gazes fixedly at where the horizon would be if the bridge did not intervene. An unpleasant militant female, but politeness indicates withdrawal. Close by, however, a boy is making his first venture on a pair of ancient wooden skates, a sturdy, shabby boy who stumbles and staggers about valiantly with a tight shut mouth. Watching him in rapt admiration are two little girls, also silent. They would be just like other little village girls but for the fact that each wears an ancient black sunbonnet with a crumpled crown that ends round the rim of the head in a ruffle from which hang long pointed curtains. They must surely be the oldest sunbonnets in England. Now, the lady of the barge wore a sunbonnet comparatively fresh. Obviously the impetus to the barge business caused by congested railways has justified her investing in a new and more modish pattern, and these relics of other palmy days back in the 'sixties have been bequeathed to her offspring. The sunbonnet is the bargewife's insignia of office. She has dedicated her daughters to the canal as surely as though she had taken vows before an altar.

A little further up a curious phenomenon appears on the ice—long lines and curves of some brownish substance apparently botanical in origin. Closer inspection reveals tea-leaves. Puzzlement ensues. Then we remembered "Westward Ho!" and the floating feathers that proved poor John Oxenham's undoing. Here are tea-leaves: upstream must be a tea drinker. Just below the very next lock—and a lovely curtain of icicles it is—we find him, or them. Two more barges. In one an ancient lady bonneted, apparently engaged in the land-lubber's pastime of sweeping the floor. In the other an ancient man, leaning against his cubby door smoking his pipe with an air of having dined well and being at peace with the world. Some fragments of swede lying round the barge indicate a dinner of herbs, and not much else, one fears, excepting tea. In some open water behind floats an unpleasant corpse, apparently that of the ship's cat. We wish the skipper good afternoon. He returns it with goodwill.

He has been frozen in, he tells us, for twelve days on his way down to London. The voyage usually takes three. It would be two if



THE THREE ANGLERS.



FELLING TIMBER NEAR THE RESERVOIR.



SKATING AT TRING.

one did not have to work the sixty-odd locks single-handed. "Where are all the other barges?" "Oh, down at Watford or Willesden or 'up at home.'" One did not choose to get stranded like this in mid-journey.

There is another point on which we would consult him. All the barges are painted to one pattern. The body, if one calls it that, is invariably covered with a geometrical design in red, yellow and perhaps blue. On the starboard side, on this canal, they carry a castle, very nobly wrought in red and white with green surroundings, and one and all they have a large circle on either side of what, for lack of nautical lore, we will term the prow—it used to be called that in romantic times. This is sometimes in one colour, sometimes in two or three in radiating segments. The castle strongly resembles Nonsuch Palace on an old inlaid cabinet of our youth. We ask the old man what it is. He does not know. We ask him about the mysterious circles.

"Oh! They're for luck."

"They look like eyes," is suggested.

"That's it; that's the idea of them," he says. "Wide awake. On the look-out, you know."

Another echo of childhood comes back—a picture of old, painted ships—surely they were Phoenician galleys—with very "wide-awake" and realistic eyes painted on their tall prows. But what a far, impossible cry from those ancient seamen to the barge builders of these inland waterways. Still the resemblance is interesting.

The old lady is still sweeping her floor, nor deigns to raise her head when we say good-bye and pass on. But the old man is right. Between here and Tring the ice-bound canal and the ice-bound country maintain a frozen solitude.

We strike off down a country lane for the reservoirs. The snow is much deeper here; road and fields blend in one dazzling mass. The way seems interminable, then suddenly we realise that we have arrived. The snow has a flatness that the flattest field could never have. It

stretches almost as far as one can see without spot or blemish. No skating here, even if red flags at intervals did not give warning of treachery beneath. On the left side, a long way off, however, there seems to be something going on. We take a beaten track across the ice—where many others have gone a lightweight need not fear to follow. In a far corner a space has been swept and a few people are skating; but more interesting is the tree-felling going on near by. By the time a great elm has crashed down on to the ice the sun has almost set. A perfect winter sunset, a rosy glow overlying a sky of purest water green, and great crimson wings flaring up from the sun towards the zenith. We leave the skaters and go over to the solitude of the untrdden reservoirs beyond. A bed of reeds runs out into one of them, burning gold in the afterglow that turns the whole snowfield pink, and topped with a line of sepia where withered seed tufts hang motionless. Behind, a misty purple wood. In front, the lonely ice, and in the middle of it a black splash on the whiteness. It is so silent that the snow seems to sing underfoot. When one stands still, the murmuring of sleepy ducks explains the blackness. Now and then one flaps or rises for a last flight. A lonely black dot shows where a sentinel is posted. When a gull alights near by the whole party chorus their resentment.

As we watch, a sound of great wings makes itself heard, and low overhead pass two wild swans. The snow light strikes upon their breasts, investing them with a pearly sheen. For a moment they are silhouetted so, gleaming yet colourless, against the darkening sky. Then, as they pass eastward the glow from the West takes them, dyes them from tip to tip of their great pinions with tender pink. For another blissful moment they are not swans, but spirits come back from that "red flare of dreams" that only first youth and last age can know. Then they fade. But long after their forms are lost the windy music of their wings can be heard upon the frosty air. When it dies we see that they have taken the last gleam of daylight with them.

O. M.

## LITERATURE

### A BOOK OF THE WEEK

*An Introduction to a Biology and Other Papers*, by A. D. Darbshire. (Cassell.)

FROM time to time books have been noticed in this column which were devoted to the golden youth lost in the war. In Charles Lister we saw the passing of one who seemed destined to be a great country gentleman, a man after his father's heart. In other cases memorial notices have had to be written about poets and prose writers, artists and other men of imagination. To-day a book lies before us which must stand as the monument of one who if he had lived might have attained a great position among the thinkers of his time. Arthur Dukinfield Darbshire, the son of an Oxford doctor of medicine, was born in 1879 and, after receiving an education at Magdalen College School, entered Balliol. In 1901 he was appointed Demonstrator in Comparative Anatomy at the University. That may be taken as the starting point of a brilliant career. At the suggestion of Professor Weldon he began a series of breeding experiments with mice, the results of which were published in *Biometrika*; for at that time, as was natural, he was influenced by Professor Weldon's hostility towards the Mendelian School. But in Manchester, whither he went in 1902, he began to think out on his own lines the problems raised by the Mendelian discovery. The result was that he came to see that Mendelianism and the Biometric theories of heredity differed only in appearance, that the contradiction between them lay more in the point of view than in themselves.

From that time onward he began to think on his own account, and his book, "Breeding and the Mendelian Discovery," published in 1911, was the outcome of investigations conducted under mental freedom. It was in 1911 that he went to Edinburgh to hold the newly created post of Lecturer in Genetics. There he made acquaintance with Professor Cossar Ewart and was able to continue his investigations in heredity with his very distinguished help and guidance at Fairlacks, the University Experimental Farm under the Pentlands. At the same time he had become acquainted with the works of Professor Bergson and was beginning to build up a biology of which this book contains fragments. Bergson delivered the Gifford Lectures in the summer of 1914,

and Darbshire had opportunities of discussing his speculations with him. That was before he perceived the great historical change impending. When the declaration of war came to him like a thunder-clap he had gone to America to lecture; the University at Columbia had offered him a Research scholarship and he was also offered a professorship at the new University of Vancouver. But like so many of the most high minded of his generation, he could not think of his own advancement or even of leaving Great Britain when the country was seriously threatened, though he had not the physique for a soldier, scarcely for any kind of physical work. He trained himself for munitions at Heriot Watt Engineering College, but not finding it easy to get himself suitable employment, he joined as a private the 14th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in July, 1915. Miss Helen Darbshire, who writes a charming preface to his book, tells us that "he devoted himself to his duties as a soldier with the same zest and the same meticulous attention to detail that marked his work in other spheres, and he won the love and admiration of his comrades." But the work was too much for him. In camp at Gailes on Christmas Day he was taken suddenly ill with cerebral meningitis and died the next morning. Three days after his death he was gazetted Second-Lieutenant in the Royal Garrison Artillery. Very few beyond the circle of his intimate friends would have known what a fine intellect was lost but for the labour of love which has collected and arranged those papers. The interest of them lies in the fact that the writer had advanced an important step. The plan of the book was itself very original. It was addressed not as might have been expected to students in biology, but to "all those who are curious about the meaning of life." He himself wrote that "the term 'biology' is used by the author to signify the interpretation rather than the mere description of life." The names of the four long chapters of which it was to consist will tell more about it than any description could do:

I. The failure of modern interpretative Biology.

II. The utilitarian origin of the human intelligence.

III. The consequent acceptability to many minds of a mechanistic theory of the organism and of a materialistic theory of evolution.

IV. Some suggestions as to the direction in which an understanding of life may be sought.

The plan was sketched out in terms of music :

- Chapter I. 1st Movement.
- Chapter II. Scherzo.
- Chapter III. Adagio.
- Chapter IV. Finale.

Beethoven, Samuel Butler and Bergson were the three greatest influences over his mind. Before leaving this preface we must quote the fine description of his individuality :

In character he was essentially childlike; generous to a fault, with no arrogance, no malice and no meanness. He had a genius for absurdity, and he used it, as he used his other gifts, with the delight of a child and the skill and thoroughness of an artist. He never made enemies, and he had an infinite capacity for making friends. The men who helped him with his experiments, his laboratory assistants, his gardener, the farmer at Fairlacks were all to him fellow-workers and friends, to whom he delighted to express his gratitude, and with whom he shared, as far as he could, his jests, his interests, and his ideas.

These, then, are the main features, rudely sketched, of his biography. They show a young man of high spirit, unmeasurable promise and great loyalty, who perished at the very time of life when men are at least getting ready to do their best work. He was only thirty-six at the time of his death. Time and place are not very fitting to enter on a discussion of the soundness or unsoundness of his views. Bergson and his philosophy have great opponents in this country, and biology is guarded by men who adopt as an almost supernatural injunction the system of reasoning through cause and effect. It may easily be imagined that some of them would be inclined to mock at a philosopher who

regards reasoning by cause and effect as an out of date form of investigation. Two quotations are given from Professor Ray Lankester to illustrate the conventional attitude :

"Nature," he says, "is a vast and orderly mechanism, the working of which we can, to a large extent, perceive, foresee and manipulate, so as to bring about certain results and avoid others." And he enjoys "that happiness and prosperity which arises from the occurrence of the expected, the non-occurrence of the unexpected and the determination within ever-expanding limits of what shall occur."

In this way, says our author, he hopes to reach the fundamental principle and the bedrock of certainty, but he does not. This then is the field of discussion, and whoever enters it will at least obtain that pleasure which comes from contact with a singularly strong and original mind. And to strength, charm also is added. The reader will come on almost every page upon the most unexpected turns of thought backed up by knowledge gleaned far and wide. It would be very easy to point out inconsistencies, arguments that do not convince, and comparisons that will not hold; but these do not affect the general healthy, stimulating effect of the writing. We do not profess to be able to find in Professor Bergson's philosophy the substance and the support which Mr. Darbshire did, but on the other hand there is nothing more inimical to human progress than the belief in any man or any school of men that he has arrived at the end of a process of thought or belief. As soon as people begin to think that they have attained finality in knowledge they become, consciously or not, barriers to the enterprise of the new adventurous minds which every generation produces, and to whom we owe that progress which has never yet come to a standstill and is far yet from seeing the final goal.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### DR. EDWARDS ON RECLAMATION EXPENSES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—May I make some corrections in your recent article? By a confusion of quarters and coombs, the number of bushels is two too many; forty-two of the best wheat is correct. Some was sold for seed at a lower rate, at the machine, to a local farmer who had seen the crop growing. The total price received is £403 5s., including tail; the total cost, £130. What addition is needed per acre can be applied to suit the particular case. Here the rent paid to the Duchy for cultivated land is 7s. 4d., without shooting rights. Cost of reclamation, £5; that is, total cost on the land till first crop was sown or planted; of course, including netting, clearing, chalking and breaking up. No; I did not go to Belgium just before war broke out to study my methods—which had then already been going on for ten years—but to improve them. When I showed my photographs to such men as le Chanoine Smet, Dr. van Elst, Captain Ing. Charlier, etc., and they saw the bracken, they said: "Why, we reckon land that grows bracken good land!" and I hardly found any of such land that had not long ago been reclaimed. Before getting down to the conditions they have dealt with we have much to do. I was speaking of East Africa as regards putting on hands: it would never do to be known to do as described, here, and my folk now (what are left) are as loyal and interested in the work as one could wish. At first one is up against public opinion and local prejudice. One may say, but for the manorial expenditure the rest would be thrown away. Of course, there are great risks and conditions one cannot control; but the manorial is one of those that can be adapted to the crop, etc., bar the present lack of potash. In your quotation from Dr. Russell's "Fertility of Soils" in "Reclaiming the Waste," is the answer to those who persist in declaring that only two (now increased to three) good crops can be taken from these lands, when newly broken up. He there puts on record the average sale of produce per acre at Tangham (1908-12) as £6 to £7. That is above the £4 stated by Mr. Turner as the average of English land. From figures sent me I make the Tangham produce last season come to £14 per acre for corn and peas, and that without potash for two years at least (potatoes failed). Let it be clear that these are the tenth to twelfth crops grown on that land. I had nothing to do with the accounts here till Mr. Beverley (like the loyal fellow that he is) took up arms very soon after August, 1914. My figures are taken from a book kept in addition to the Development Commission accounts (by the same accountant) and entered weekly against the various crops under some twelve headings. This book, as I stated in your issue of August 5th, can be seen here and represents the actual costs and returns, except straw, of the land. The other expenses—depreciation, insurance, interest on first cost, which will vary according to circumstances—are lumped together and can be added quarterly or yearly, as shown in your issue of July 22nd. One other point as to this. The horse labour last year was charged daily at 4s. 6d. When the year's accounts were made up to September 30th it was found the cost per working day per horse was 4s. 9d.; also manure cartage and distribution is calculated at so much a ton and does not exactly correspond to the actual cost. These factors may cause a relatively minute discrepancy between the crop book and the general ledger. The accounts are audited by the Treasury, and from October, 1913, to September 30th, 1915, can, no doubt, be obtained at 6s. Dean's Yard. I have not seen those to September 30th last. Of the original cost of reclamation £700 has been repaid, less some rent deducted at the Duchy office. This large amount is due to abnormal

prices. In Suffolk, before the work had gone on as long as this has done, several hundred pounds' worth of pork were sold, not included by Dr. Russell, and this point of view is important. We are only just beginning to gain a little here with pigs, having had bad luck. I cannot yet give more than a very rough estimate for the current season; indeed, this frost makes one anxious about the clamps, and perhaps it will be best to await the end of the season in June.—C. S. EDWARDS.

### CONVERTING LAWNS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS INTO POTATO PLOTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—It is not pleasant to risk being accused of trying to damp down such patriotic spirit as prompts questions like that raised by "Cestrian" in your issue of December 30th, but the mere suggestion of the conversion of ordinary lawns or pleasure grounds into potato plots compels the thought whether in some of these cases zeal may not be outrunning discretion. There are doubtless some extensive lawns and the like which could, perhaps advantageously, be made to yield crops; but are there not as many others in which the results could scarcely be looked forward to as more than doubtful? So far as the coming season's crop is concerned, the all-important question must be that of labour and manures, and in most instances there are probably fields adjoining the lawns, or in the near vicinity, upon which these could be far more expeditiously and profitably employed. In all such cases, to divert either labour or manures from the fields to the lawn would be but poor economy at the present time.—GEORGE BOLAM.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—The first subject for consideration before digging up a lawn is that you will have the expense of relaying it. This is, in my opinion, too expensive an affair. For the first year after the lawn was broken up you would find that the potato crop would be worthless; you might grow some greenstuff in the autumn. There are plenty of allotments near here that are not cultivated, and if the war does not last over 1918, the man who breaks up his lawn now will only reap sorrow.—C. E. CURTIS, Bath.

### ENGLISH POTATOES IN AMERICA.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—I have been reading with much interest for the past year or so your leaders on the increased area of cultivation in England, and especially the necessity of utilising every available patch of ground for the cultivation of potatoes. I am enclosing a clipping from the New York *Evening Post* of January 22nd, 1917, which, in the light of knowledge gleaned from your paper, does not seem as it could be true, or else that there is some grievous defect in your system of food control. I do not credit much that I read in American papers for downright accuracy, but the *Evening Post* is one of our most reliable sheets, and the despatch seems plausible.—CORNELIUS V. V. SEWELL.

[The enclosed paragraph reads as follows: "Chicago, January 22.—High prices paid for potatoes on the Chicago market have attracted shipments from England to compete with the American-grown product, according to a statement to-day by Sol. Westerfeld, former president of the National Retail Grocers' Association. 'It seems almost impossible that England at this time can send potatoes to Chicago to compete with the product grown in Illinois, Wisconsin, and other Western States, but I have seen the bills of lading,' he said. Potatoes on the Chicago market to-day are selling at \$2.25 a bushel."—ED.]

## A DARTMOOR SHEEPWASH.

SIR.—As a lover of Dartmoor I am extremely interested in your article on "Reclamation by the Prince of Wales" on February 3rd. I now send a photograph of what I think must be one of the oldest sheepwashes in existence. It is on the moor not far from the Duchy, and, as your architectural expert will be pleased to see, is made entirely of local stone, plus



PRIMITIVE BUT EFFICIENT.

an imported tree trunk. I do not know who constructed it, but he did his work well even to paving the approaches. I should very much like to know when the first sheep dip was invented.—DEVON.

## THE COST OF PRODUCING TABLE POULTRY.

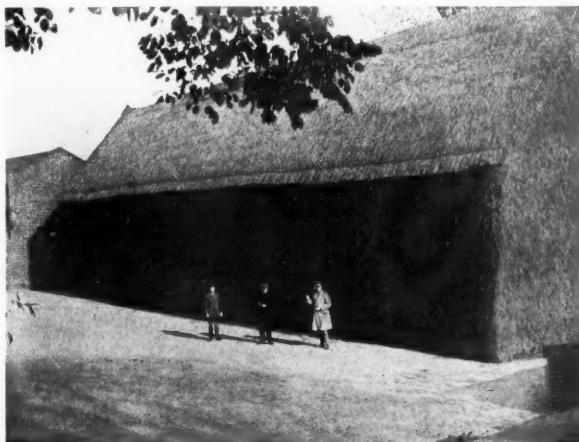
[To the Editor of "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—In order to complete my article on "Animals as Food Producers," which appeared in your issue of February 10th, the following explanatory note ought to have been added. I would, therefore, be very much obliged if you will kindly insert it in your next issue. Under normal conditions prime quality table poultry when sixteen weeks old, weighing about 4lb., live weight, should cost to produce about 7d. per lb., l.w., and sell for about 10d. per lb., l.w., leaving a net margin of profit to the producer of about 3d. per lb., l.w. This refers to birds artificially hatched, reared, and specially fed for the express purpose of producing prime quality flesh. Birds naturally hatched and reared under ordinary farmyard conditions when at this weight should cost to produce in normal times about 6d. per lb., l.w., and sell for about 9d. per lb., l.w.; and although their flesh will not be of quite such good quality as the former, yet it will leave about the same margin of profit to the producer, namely, 3d. per lb., l.w. It must be borne in mind that although one is on comparatively safe ground in making comparisons of the growth of the fleshes of food producing animals, yet in making financial comparisons of the possible profit which can be derived from producing them to a certain amount of latitude must be allowed, and the figures accepted as giving only some sort of general idea of their comparative value when looked upon as profit producers. Such comparisons are, of course, difficult to make, but because they are difficult is no reason why they should not be attempted.—F. G. PAYNTER.

## A GIGANTIC STACK

[To the Editor of "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—The enclosed photograph is of a 300 ton hay stack, believed to be the largest in England. This huge stack was built last year by Messrs. Warren and Son, Ipswich. It is all good meadow hay gathered in excellent condition. Measurements are as follows: Length, 30yd.; width, 11yd; height from ground to eaves, 16ft.; height from ground to top of thatch, 30ft.; weight approximately 300 tons. I took the photograph at the time of purchase by the Government. The purchasing officer is seen in the photograph (on right), Mr. Warren (centre) and his son (on the left). The stack which is still standing has not overheated at all. Owing to its being so near to buildings I was unable to include the whole of it in my picture, but I think one can get a good idea of its size by the figures in the foreground. I had a great difficulty in



THREE HUNDRED TONS OF GOOD HAY.

getting the photograph at all, and eventually managed it by climbing on the roof of some sheds. An elevator worked by a petrol engine was used for building this huge stack. Mr. Warren would like to know if there is a larger one in the British Isles.—S. A. BROWN.

## NOT AN AMERICAN.

[To the Editor of "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—We were very much interested in your notice of Mr. Coningsby Dawson's novel, "Slaves of Freedom," in the issue of COUNTRY LIFE for February 3rd; but your reviewer writes: "We doubt whether any writer, save an American . . ." We should like to point out that not every writer on the other side of the Atlantic is an American, and it may interest your readers no less than your critic to know that Mr. Coningsby Dawson is an Englishman, being the son of Dr. William J. Dawson, who held various appointments as a Wesleyan minister at Wesley's Chapel and elsewhere, and is now pastor of the old first Presbyterian Church, Newark, New Jersey. Mr. Coningsby Dawson himself joined the Canadian Artillery when the war broke out, and is now fighting on the Western Front.—CONSTABLE AND CO.

[We regret that space forbids our publishing the interesting portrait sent with above letter.—ED.].

## IN MEMORY OF LUSITANIA VICTIMS.

[To the Editor of "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—The enclosed photograph at first sight might strike one as being of no interest, but there is a very pathetic story attached to same. The donkey here shown belonged to two dear little children who went down on the *Lusitania*. At the suggestion of a lady the animal has lately been presented to a holiday home for poor crippled children, which has been the means of putting much brightness into the lives of these little ones, who thoroughly enjoy a ride in turn round the grounds of this lovely home.



THE CRIPPLE CHILDREN'S PET.

At the suggestion of a lady the animal has lately been presented to a holiday home for poor crippled children, which has been the means of putting much brightness into the lives of these little ones, who thoroughly enjoy a ride in turn round the grounds of this lovely home. A small brass plate hangs round the donkey's head, on which is written: "In Memoriam. Elsa and Percival. Lost in the *Lusitania*, 1915."—H. P.

## CHOWS WORRYING SHEEP.

[To the Editor of "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—As an interested reader of "Kennel Notes" each week in COUNTRY LIFE, I am wondering if you can give me any help in my present difficulty. I have two chow dogs—one eighteen months old, the other barely nine months. Some few weeks ago the dogs were racing ahead of us through a wood, when suddenly I caught sight of sheep running in the field beyond, and rushing up found the dogs had a sheep down and were worrying it. We got them away and secured them; the owner was compensated and the matter fixed up. We put it down to exuberance of spirits, and made up our minds to take every opportunity of breaking the creatures to sheep. Sunday last we were walking along a road in quite the opposite direction, with no suspicion that sheep were near—the dogs both at heel. As we came near the lodge at the entrance to a park I put the pup on a lead, knowing there might be other puppies about. The elder dog suddenly made off like a streak of lightning, and to my horror when I got to the gate I saw him with a sheep by the throat. The farmer happened to be on the spot, and the poor brute was so badly injured he despatched it at once. Can you tell me if there is any hope now of breaking either dog (the puppy had nothing to do with the second)? They are both fine creatures, and it seems hard to condemn them at such an early age, in addition to the fact that they are great favourites in the house. It is wretched to think one cannot take a dog out and about with one except on a lead, but, of course, a recurrence of these happenings is impossible. One's dogs become like children almost, and this particular one has been tamed from the wildest of animals to a delightful companion. He had many walks on the moors in Derbyshire with me in the autumn. I kept him near me, but he ran quite free and apparently took no notice of sheep then. I suppose it was our carelessness in allowing the dogs so far ahead in the first instance that caused the trouble; we had been through the field many times before and had never seen a sign of sheep.—CHOW LOVER.

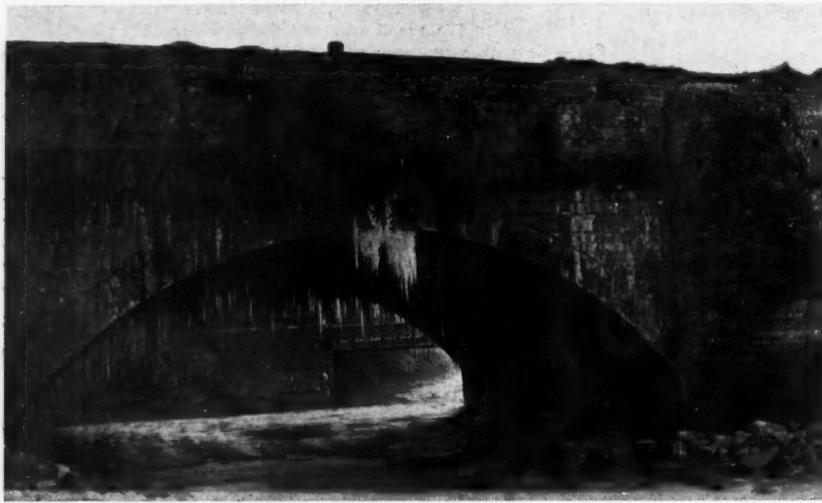
[It is almost impossible to break a dog of sheep worrying when it has once begun, though severe chastisement, immediately following the act, is sometimes effectual. Nothing can be done now beyond keeping the dog on a lead when in proximity to sheep, and great care must be taken to see that he does not escape from home. Otherwise the chances are that he will go off in search of sheep.—ED.].

[Feb. 17th, 1917.]

## AN ARCH OF ICICLES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—The enclosed photograph portrays an arch of a bridge spanning a river in South Wales. It is curious to note that over this bridge passes a section of



A LEAKING AQUADUCT DURING THE FROST.

the Swansea canal. During this severe weather numerous icicles have formed on the underside of the arch, due to the canal water leaking through the brickwork and becoming frozen.—F. SHEWRING.

## "PATTYGAMAWS."

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—Allow me to express the pleasure I derive from the reading of many of your correspondent's letters on a diversity of subjects. With regard to the letter in your issue of February 3rd from Mr. Arthur O. Cooke referring to "Pattygamaws" I have no doubt that before this Mr. Cooke has realised his desire and secured some of these delectable edibles. If not, he has only to go to any good class confectioner and ask for "marshmallows" and he will get his *Pâté de Guimauve*; that is, of course, providing he has not deposited all his money in the War Loan Fund in the meantime. The best marshmallows, in my opinion, are made in the United States, and should Mr. Cooke obtain some of these toothsome delicacies I feel sure he will be satisfied that the flavour they had in his boyhood is still retained. With regard to "The Doings of the Spider" the story as I heard it in my young days is somewhat as follows: An illustrious personage—whether King Bruce or Mahammed I cannot say, but it was at least someone of importance enough to have enemies—frequently railed at the folly of the creation of spiders and flies. According to the story the Creator of these insects wished to convince this railer that all that was made, was made, and that it was very good, so that on one occasion when our hero fell asleep in a forest and was like to be surrounded by his foes a fly bit his lip and he awoke. The other incident was that the spider spread its web over the door of the hut in which he hid, and his enemies coming up and seeing the web over the door unbroken, were satisfied that he could not be inside. I shall be glad if, through this note, some other correspondent may come forward and identify the hero.—J. R.



IN CASSIOBURY PARK.

## A DECREASE IN STARLINGS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—Although conditions are somewhat against a wider field of observation, I can add to the note of Mr. Cornish Watkins with regard to the decrease of starlings so far as my own immediate district of South-West Yorkshire is concerned; parties of birds are both smaller and fewer than usual, and large flocks have been conspicuous by their absence. Mr. Watkins' note as to changes of migration routes reminded me of a letter I received early in January—dated December 29th—from a head keeper in Derbyshire. One sentence read: "I am afraid we have not done with the storm yet, as last week larks, plovers and lots of other birds were all making south in thousands." Flock after flock, I am told, passed over a moorland district which is quite away from all regular migration routes. The keepers had seen nothing like it before. Another part of the letter reads: "We have been having snow for the last three weeks, so I have been busy with the foxes; got ten of them. We had a job with one; we put Jack and another dog into the rocks to one and they got fast, so we had to work hard cutting stone, etc., and managed to get them out after being in thirty-one hours. Poor Jack is here with a broken nose and a piece off his cheek as big as a five shilling piece, but is going on all right." Hunting people in other shires may be a trifle shocked; but the local farmers' wives would be pleased. Jack is a wire-haired terrier, and is well accustomed to such encounters.—RALPH CHISLETT.

## A FROST SCENE IN LONDON.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—The accompanying photograph is a good example of the beautiful results



THE CLOTHES LINE BECOMES A THING OF BEAUTY.

Jack Frost obtains when working with the most ordinary outfit. In this case the scene consisted of nothing more exalted than a bony rd n Rutland Street, Pimlico. The extraordinary scene was caused through the storm overflowing, and the water falling on the clothes line formed the icicles like herrings on a stick.—F. E. COOK.

## THE DESERTED MILL.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—I enclose a picture of the deserted mill in Cassiobury Park, Watford, the seat of the Earl of Essex. Under ordinary conditions this mill, though interesting, is not a particularly beautiful structure, but its snowy setting has imparted a new attractiveness to it which I think lends itself very kindly to the camera.—E. M. McLAREN.

## OLD FIRE HOOKS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—In the issue of COUNTRY LIFE for October 28th, 1916, there is an article on "Old Fire Hooks." One of these hooks with a long shaft may be seen hanging on the wall of some cottages which form part of the boundary of the Parish churchyard at Welwyn, Herts—or was not long ago—and can be easily seen from the churchyard side. There is another here on this estate, without a shaft, which no one appears to have seen used and did not know what it was for. It would be interesting to know where your correspondent can place the four he speaks of, or, rather, the two, in addition to the two he gives—St. Botolph's Church, Cambridge, and Streatham.—HENRY CLARKE.